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# RODERICK HUDSON

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BY

HENRY JAMES

IN TWO VOLUMES

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# RODERICK HUDSON.

## I.

ROWLAND MALLET had made his arrangements to sail for Europe on the 1st of September, and having in the interval a fortnight to spare, he determined to spend it with his cousin Cecilia, the widow of a nephew of his father. He was urged by the reflection that an affectionate farewell might help to exonerate him from the charge of neglect frequently preferred by this lady. It was not that the young man disliked her; on the contrary, he regarded her with a tender admiration, and he had not forgotten how when his cousin brought her home on her marriage he seemed to feel the upward sweep of the empty bough from which the golden fruit had been plucked, and then and there accepted the prospect of bachelorhood. The truth was that, as it will be part of the entertainment of this narrative to exhibit, Rowland Mallet had an uncomfortably sensitive conscience, and that, in spite of the seeming paradox, his visits to Cecilia were rare because she and her misfortunes were often uppermost in it. Her misfortunes were three in number: first, she had lost her husband; second, she had lost her money (or the greater part of it); and third, she lived at Northampton, Massachusetts. Mallet's compassion was

really wasted, because Cecilia was a very clever woman, and a skilful counter-plotter to adversity. She had made herself a charming home, her economies were not obtrusive, and there was always a cheerful flutter in the folds of her crape. It was the consciousness of all this that puzzled Mallet whenever he felt tempted to put in his oar. He had money and he had time, but he never could decide just how to place these gifts gracefully at Cecilia's service. He no longer felt like marrying her; in these eight years that fancy had died a natural death. And yet her extreme cleverness seemed somehow to make charity difficult and patronage impossible. He would rather chop off his hand than offer her a cheque, a piece of useful furniture, or a black silk dress; and yet there was much sadness in seeing such a bright proud woman living in such a small dull way. Cecilia had, moreover, a turn for sarcasm, and her smile, which was her pretty feature, was never so pretty as when her sprightly phrase had a lurking scratch in it. Rowland remembered that for him she was all smiles, and suspected awkwardly that he ministered not a little to her sense of the irony of things. And in truth, with his means, his leisure, and his opportunities, what had he done? He had a lively suspicion of his uselessness. Cecilia meanwhile cut out her own dresses, and was personally giving her little girl the education of a princess.

This time, however, he presented himself bravely enough; for in the way of activity it was something definite at least to be going to Europe and to be meaning to spend the winter in Rome. Cecilia met him in the early dusk at the gate of her little garden, amid a studied combination of horticultural odours. A rosy widow of twenty-eight, half-cousin, half-hostess, doing the honours of a fragrant cottage on a midsummer evening, was a phenomenon to which the young man's imagination was able to do ample justice. Cecilia was always gracious, but this evening she was almost joyous. She was in a happy

mood, and Mallet imagined there was a private reason for it—a reason quite distinct from her pleasure in receiving her honoured kinsman. The next day he flattered himself he was on the way to discover it.

For the present, after tea, as they sat on the rose-framed porch, while Rowland held his younger cousin between his knees, and she, enjoying her situation, listened timorously for the stroke of bedtime, Cecilia insisted on talking more about her visitor than about herself.

"What is it you mean to do in Europe?" she asked, lightly, giving a turn to the frill of her sleeve—just such a turn as seemed to Mallet to bring out all the latent difficulties of the question.

"Why, very much what I do here," he answered. "No great harm!"

"Is it true," Cecilia asked, "that here you do no great harm? Is not a man like you doing harm when he is not doing positive good?"

"Your compliment is ambiguous," said Rowland.

"No," answered the widow, "you know what I think of you. You have a turn for doing nice things and behaving yourself properly. You have it, in the first place, in your character. You are an amiable creature. Ask Bessie if you don't hold her more gently and comfortably than any of her other admirers."

"He holds me more comfortably than Mr. Hudson," Bessie declared roundly.

Rowland, not knowing Mr. Hudson, could but half appreciate the eulogy, and Cecilia went on to develop her idea. "Your circumstances, in the second place, suggest the idea of some sort of social usefulness. You are intelligent, you are well informed, and your benevolence, if one may call it benevolence, would be discriminating. You are rich and unoccupied, so that it might be abundant. Therefore I say you are a man to do something on a large scale. Bestir yourself, dear Rowland,

or we may be taught to think that Virtue herself is setting a bad example."

"Heaven forbid," cried Rowland, "that I should set the examples of virtue! I am quite willing to follow them, however, and if I don't do something on the grand scale it is that my genius is altogether imitative, and that I have not recently encountered any very striking models of grandeur. Pray, what shall I do? Found an orphan asylum or build a dormitory for Harvard College? I am not rich enough to do either in an ideally handsome way, and I confess that yet a while I feel too young to strike my *grand coup*. I am holding myself ready for inspiration. I am waiting till something takes my fancy irresistibly. If inspiration comes at forty, it will be a hundred pities to have tied up my money-bag at thirty."

"Well, I give you till forty," said Cecilia. "It's only a word to the wise—a notification that you are expected not to run your course without having done something handsome for your fellow-men."

Nine o'clock sounded, and Bessie with each stroke courted a closer embrace. But a single winged word from her mother overleaped her successive intrenchments. She turned and kissed her cousin, and deposited an irrepressible tear on his moustache. Then she went and said her prayers to her mother; it was evident she was being admirably brought up. Rowland, with the permission of his hostess, lighted a cigar and puffed it a while in silence. Cecilia's interest in his career seemed very agreeable. That Mallet was without vanity I by no means intend to affirm; but there had been times when, seeing him accept hardly less deferentially advice even more peremptory than the widow's, you might have asked yourself what had become of his vanity. Now, in the sweet-smelling starlight, he felt gently wooed to egotism. There was a project connected with his going abroad which it was on his tongue's end to communicate. It had no relation to hospitals or dormitories, and yet it

would have sounded very generous. But it was not because it would have sounded generous that poor Mallet at last puffed it away in the fumes of his cigar. Useful though it might be, it expressed most imperfectly the young man's own personal conception of usefulness. He was extremely fond of all the arts, and he had an almost passionate enjoyment of pictures. He had seen a great many, and he judged them sagaciously. It had occurred to him some time before that it would be the work of a good citizen to go abroad and with all expedition and secrecy purchase certain valuable specimens of the Dutch and Italian schools, as to which he had received private proposals, and then present his treasures out of hand to an American city, not unknown to æsthetic fame, in which at that time there prevailed a good deal of fruitless aspiration toward an art-museum. He had seen himself in imagination, more than once, in some mouldy old saloon of a Florentine palace, turning toward the deep embrasure of the window some scarcely-faded Ghirlandaio or Botticelli, while a host in reduced circumstances pointed out the lovely drawing of a hand. But he imparted none of these visions to Cecilia, and he suddenly swept them away with the declaration that he was of course an idle useless creature, and that he should probably be even more so in Europe than at home. "The only thing is," he said, "that there I shall *seem* to be doing something. I shall be better entertained, and shall be therefore, I suppose, in a better humour with life. You may say that that is just the humour a useless man should keep out of. He should cultivate discontent. I did a good many things when I was in Europe before, but I did not spend a winter in Rome. Every one assures me that this is a peculiar refinement of bliss; most people talk about Rome in the same way. It is evidently only a sort of idealised form of loafing: a passive life in Rome, thanks to the number and the quality of one's impressions, takes on a very respectable

likeness to activity. It is still lotus-eating, only you sit down at table and the lotuses are served up on rococo china. It's all very well, but I have a distinct prevision of this—that if Roman life doesn't do something substantial to make you happier, it increases tenfold your liability to moral misery. It seems to me a rash thing for a sensitive soul deliberately to cultivate its sensibilities by rambling too often among the ruins of the Palatine or riding too often in the shadow of the crumbling aqueducts. In such recreations the chords of feeling grow tense, and after-life, to spare your intellectual nerves, must play upon them with a touch as dainty as the tread of Mignon when she danced her egg-dance."

"I should have said, my dear Rowland," said Cecilia, with a laugh, "that your nerves were tough—that your eggs were hard!"

"That being stupid, you mean, I might be happy? Upon my word, I am not happy! I am clever enough to want more than I have got. I am tired of myself, my own thoughts, my own affairs, my own eternal company. True happiness, we are told, consists in getting out of one's self; but the point is not only to get out—you must stay out; and to stay out you must have some absorbing errand. Unfortunately, I have no errand, and nobody will trust me with one. I want to care for something or for somebody. And I want to care with a certain ardour; even, if you can believe it, with a certain passion. I can't just now feel ardent and passionate about a hospital or a dormitory. Do you know I sometimes think that I am a man of genius, half-finished? The genius has been left out, the faculty of expression is wanting; but the need for expression remains, and I spend my days groping for the latch of a closed door."

"What an immense number of words," said Cecilia after a pause, "to say you want to fall in love! I have no doubt you have as good a genius for that as any one, if you would only trust it."

"Of course I have thought of that, and I assure you I hold myself ready. But evidently I am not inflammable. Is there in Northampton some perfect epitome of the graces?"

"Of the graces?" said Cecilia, raising her eyebrows and suppressing too distinct a consciousness of being herself a rosy embodiment of several. "The household virtues are better represented. There are some excellent girls, and there are two or three very pretty ones. I will have them here one by one to tea, if you like."

"I should particularly like it; especially as I should give you a chance to see by the profundity of my attention that if I am not happy it's not for want of taking pains."

Cecilia was silent a moment; and then, "On the whole," she resumed, "I don't think there are any worth asking. There are none so very pretty, none so very pleasing."

"Are you very sure?" asked the young man, rising and throwing away his cigar-end.

"Upon my word," cried Cecilia, "one would suppose I wished to keep you for myself! Of course I am sure! But as the penalty of your insinuations, I shall invite the plainest and prosiest damsel that can be found and leave you alone with her."

Rowland smiled. "Even against her," he said, "I should be sorry to conclude until I had given her my respectful attention."

This little profession of ideal chivalry (which closed the conversation) was not quite so fanciful on Mallet's lips as it would have been on those of many another man; as a rapid glance at his antecedents may help to make the reader perceive. His life had been a singular mixture of the rough and the smooth. He had sprung from a rigid Puritan stock, and had been brought up to think much more intently of the duties of this life than of its privileges and pleasures. His progenitors had sub-

mitted in the matter of dogmatic theology to the relaxing influences of recent years; but if Rowland's youthful consciousness was not chilled by the menace of long punishment for brief transgression, he had at least been made to feel that there ran through all things a strain of right and of wrong as different, after all, in their complexion as the texture to the spiritual sense of Sundays and week-days. His father was a chip of the primal Puritan block, a man with an icy smile and a stony frown. He had always bestowed on his son, on principle, more frowns than smiles, and if the lad had not been turned to stone himself it was because nature had blessed him inwardly with a well of vivifying waters. Mrs. Mallet had been a Miss Rowland, the daughter of a retired sea-captain once famous on the ships that sailed from Salem and Newburyport. He had brought to port many a cargo which crowned the edifice of fortunes already almost colossal, but he had also done a little sagacious trading on his own account, and he was able to retire, prematurely for so seaworthy a maritime organism, upon a pension of his own providing. He was to be seen for a year on the Salem wharves, smoking the best tobacco and contemplating the seaward horizon with an inveteracy which superficial minds interpreted as a sign of repentance. At last, one evening, he disappeared beneath it, as he had often done before; this time, however, not as a commissioned navigator, but simply as an amateur of an observing turn likely to prove oppressive to the officer in command of the vessel. Five months later his place at home knew him again, and made the acquaintance also of a handsome, light-coloured young woman, of redundant contour, speaking a foreign tongue. The foreign tongue proved after much conflicting research to be the idiom of Amsterdam, and the young woman, which was stranger still, to be Captain Rowland's wife. Why he had gone forth so suddenly across the seas to marry her, what had happened between them before, and whether—

though it was of questionable propriety for a good citizen to espouse a young person of mysterious origin who did her hair in fantastically elaborate plaits and in whose appearance "figure" enjoyed such striking predominance —he would not have had a heavy weight on his conscience if he had remained an irresponsible bachelor; these questions, and many others bearing with varying degrees of immediacy on the subject, were much propounded but scantily answered, and this history need not be charged with resolving them. Mrs. Rowland, for so handsome a woman, proved a tranquil neighbour and an excellent housewife. Her extremely fresh complexion, however, was always suffused with an air of apathetic homesickness, and she played her part in American society chiefly by having the little squares of brick pavement in front of her dwelling scoured and polished as nearly as possible into the likeness of Dutch tiles. Rowland Mallet remembered having seen her as a child—an immensely stout white-faced lady, wearing a high cap of very stiff tulle, speaking English with a formidable accent, and suffering from dropsy. Captain Rowland was a little bronzed and wizened man, with eccentric opinions. He advocated the creation of a public promenade along the sea, with arbours and little green tables for the consumption of beer, and a platform, surrounded by Chinese lanterns, for dancing. He especially desired the town library to be opened on Sundays; though, as he never entered it on week-days, it was easy to turn the proposition into ridicule. Therefore, if Mrs. Mallet was a woman of an exquisite moral tone, it was not that she had inherited her temper from an ancestry with a turn for casuistry. Jonas Mallet at the time of his marriage was conducting with silent shrewdness a small unpromising business. Both his shrewdness and his silence increased with his years, and at the close of his life he was an extremely well-dressed, well-brushed gentleman with a frigid gray eye, who said little to anybody, but of whom everybody

said that he had a very handsome fortune. He was not a sentimental father, and the roughness I just now spoke of in Rowland's life dated from his early boyhood. Mr. Mallet, whenever he looked at his son, felt extreme compunction at having made a fortune. He remembered that the fruit had not dropped ripe from the tree into his own mouth, and he determined it should be no fault of his if the boy were corrupted by luxury. Rowland therefore, except for a good deal of expensive instruction in foreign tongues and abstruse sciences, received the education of a poor man's son. His fare was plain, his temper familiar with the discipline of patched trousers, and his habits marked by an exaggerated simplicity which was kept up really at great expense. He was banished to the country for months together, in the midst of servants, who had strict injunctions to see that he suffered no serious harm, but were as strictly forbidden to wait upon him. As no school could be found conducted on principles sufficiently rigorous, he was attended at home by a master who set a high price on the understanding that he was to illustrate the beauty of abstinence, not only by precept but by example. Rowland passed for a child of ordinary parts, and certainly, during his younger years, was an excellent imitation of a boy who had inherited nothing whatever that was to make life easy. He was passive, pliable, frank, extremely slow at his books, and inordinately fond of trout-fishing. His hair, a memento of his Dutch ancestry, was of the fairest shade of yellow, his complexion absurdly rosy, and the measurement of the waist, when he was about ten years old, quite alarmingly large. This, however, was but an episode in his growth; he became afterwards a fresh-coloured, yellow-bearded man, but he was never accused of anything more awkward than a manly roundness. He emerged from childhood a simple, wholesome, round-eyed lad, with no suspicion that a less roundabout course might have been taken to make him happy, but with a vague sense that

his young experience was not a fair sample of human freedom, and that he was to make a great many discoveries. When he was about fifteen he achieved a momentous one. He ascertained that his mother was a saint. She had always been a very vivid presence in his life, but so intensely gentle a one that his sense was fully opened to it only by the danger of losing her. She had an illness which for many months was liable at any moment to terminate fatally, and during her long-arrested convalescence she removed the mask which she had worn for years by her husband's order. Rowland spent his days at her side, and felt before long as if he had made a new friend. All his impressions at this period were commented upon and interpreted at leisure in the future, and it was only then that he understood that his mother had been for fifteen years a singularly unhappy woman. Her marriage had been an immitigable error which she had spent her life in trying to look in the face. She found nothing to oppose to her husband's rigid and consistent will but the appearance of absolute compliance; her courage sank, and she lived for a while in a sort of spiritual torpor. But at last, as her child emerged from babyhood, she began to feel a certain charm in patience, to discover the uses of ingenuity, and to learn that somehow or other one can always arrange one's life. She cultivated from this time forward a little private plot of sentiment, and it was of this secluded precinct that before her death she gave her son the key. Rowland's allowance at college was barely sufficient to maintain him decently, and as soon as he graduated he was taken into his father's counting-house to do small drudgery on a proportionate salary. For three years he earned his living as regularly as the obscure functionary in fustian who swept out the place. Mr. Mallet was consistent, but the perfection of his consistency was known only on his death. He left but a third of his property to his son, and devoted the remainder to various public institutions and local charities.

Rowland's third was a very easy competence, and he never felt a moment's jealousy of his fellow-pensioners; but when one of the establishments which had figured most advantageously in his father's will bethought itself to affirm the existence of a later instrument in which it had been still more handsomely treated, the young man felt a sudden passionate need to repel the claim by process of law. There was a lively tussle, but he gained his case; immediately after which he made in another quarter a donation of the contested sum. He cared nothing for the money, but he had felt an angry desire to protest against a destiny which seemed determined to be exclusively salutary. It seemed to him that he should bear a little spoiling. And yet he treated himself to a very modest quantity, and submitted without reserve to the great national discipline which began in 1861. When the Civil War broke out he immediately obtained a commission, and he did his duty for three long years as a citizen soldier. His duty was obscure, but he never lost a certain private satisfaction in remembering that on two or three occasions it had been performed with something of an ideal precision. He had disentangled himself from business, and after the war he felt a profound disinclination to tie the knot again. He had no desire to make money, he had money enough; and although he knew, and was frequently reminded, that a young man is the better for a fixed occupation, he could discover no moral advantage in driving a lucrative trade. Yet few young men of means and leisure ever made less of a parade of idleness, and indeed idleness in any degree could hardly be laid at the door of a young man who took life in the serious, attentive, reasoning fashion of our friend. It often seemed to Mallet that he wholly lacked the prime requisite of a graceful *flâneur*—the simple, sensuous, confident relish of pleasure. He had frequent fits of extreme melancholy, in which he declared that he was neither fish nor flesh nor good red herring.

His was neither an irresponsibly contemplative nature nor a sturdily practical one, and he was for ever looking in vain for the uses of the things that please and the charm of the things that sustain. He was an awkward mixture of moral and æsthetic curiosity, and yet he would have made an ineffective reformer and an indifferent artist. It seemed to him that the glow of happiness must be found either in action of some immensely solid kind on behalf of an idea, or in producing a masterpiece in one of the arts. Oftenest, perhaps, he wished he were a vigorous young man of genius without a penny. As it was, he could only buy pictures and not paint them; and in the way of action he had to content himself with making a rule to render scrupulous justice to fine strokes of behaviour in others. On the whole, he had an incorruptible modesty. With his blooming complexion and his quiet gray eye, he felt the friction of existence more than was suspected; but he asked no allowance on grounds of temper, he assumed that fate had treated him inordinately well, and that he had no excuse for taking an ill-natured view of life, and he undertook to believe that all women were fair, all men were brave, and the world was a delightful place of sojourn, until the contrary should be distinctly proved.

Cecilia's blooming garden and shady porch had seemed so friendly to repose and a cigar that she reproached him the next morning with indifference to her little parlour, not less in its way a monument to her ingenious taste. "And by the way," she added, as he followed her in, "if I refused last night to show you a pretty girl, I can at least show you a pretty boy."

She threw open a window and pointed to a statuette which occupied a place of honour among the ornaments of the room. Rowland looked at it a moment and then turned to her with an exclamation of surprise. She gave him a rapid glance, perceived that her statuette was of

altogether exceptional merit, and then smiled knowingly, as if this were a familiar idea.

"Who did it? where did you get it?" Rowland demanded.

"Oh," said Cecilia, adjusting the light, "it's a little thing of Mr. Hudson's."

"And who the deuce is Mr. Hudson?" asked Rowland. But he was absorbed; he lost her immediate reply. The statuette, in bronze, something more than two feet high, represented a naked youth drinking from a gourd. The attitude was perfectly simple. The lad was squarely planted on his feet, with his legs a little apart; his back was slightly hollowed, his head thrown back; his hands were raised to support the rustic cup. There was a loosened fillet of wild flowers about his head, and his eyes, under their dropped lids, looked straight into the cup. On the base was scratched the Greek word Δίψα, Thirst. The figure might have been some beautiful youth of ancient fable—Hylas or Narcissus, Paris or Endymion. Its beauty was the beauty of natural movement; nothing had been sought to be represented but the perfection of an attitude. This had been attentively studied—it was exquisitely rendered. Rowland demanded more light, dropped his head on this side and that, uttered vague exclamations. He said to himself, as he had said more than once in the Louvre and the Vatican, "We ugly mortals, what beautiful creatures we are!" Nothing in a long time had given him so much pleasure. "Hudson—Hudson," he asked again; "who is Hudson?"

"A young man of this place," said Cecilia.

"A young man? How old?"

"I suppose he is three or four and twenty."

"Of this place, you say—of Northampton, Massachusetts?"

"He lives here, but he comes from Virginia."

"Is he a sculptor by profession?"

"He is a law student."

Rowland burst out laughing. "He has found something in Blackstone that I never did. He makes statues, then, simply for his pleasure?"

Cecilia, with a smile, gave a little toss of her head. "For mine!"

"I congratulate you," said Rowland. "I wonder whether he could be induced to do anything for me?"

"This was a matter of friendship. I saw the figure when he had modelled it in clay, and of course I greatly admired it. He said nothing at the time, but a week ago, on my birthday, he arrived in a buggy, with this affair. He had had it cast at the foundry at Chicopee; I believe it's a beautiful piece of bronze. He begged me to accept."

"Upon my word," said Mallet, "he does things handsomely!" and he fell to admiring the statue again.

"So, then," said Cecilia, "it's very remarkable?"

"Why, my dear cousin," Rowland answered, "Mr. Hudson of Virginia is an extraordinary——" Then suddenly stopping—"Is he a great friend of yours?" he asked.

"A great friend?" and Cecilia hesitated. "I regard him as a child!"

"Well," said Rowland, "he's a very clever child! Tell me something about him; I should like to see him."

Cecilia was obliged to go to her daughter's music lesson, but she assured Rowland that she would arrange for him a meeting with the young sculptor. He was a frequent visitor, and as he had not called for some days it was likely he would come that evening. Rowland, left alone, examined the statuette at his leisure, and returned more than once during the day to take another look at it. He discovered its weak points, but it wore well. It had the stamp of genius. Rowland envied the happy youth who, in a New England village, without aid or encouragement, without models or examples, had found it so easy to produce a lovely work.

## II.

In the evening, as he was smoking his cigar on the verandah, a light quick step pressed the gravel of the garden path, and in a moment a young man made his bow to Cecilia. It was rather a nod than a bow, and indicated either that he was an old friend or that he was scantily versed in the usual social forms. Cecilia, who was sitting near the steps, pointed to a neighbouring chair, but the young man seated himself abruptly on a step at her feet, and began to fan himself vigorously with his hat, breaking out into a lively objurgation upon the hot weather. "I'm dripping wet!" he said, without ceremony.

"You walk too fast," said Cecilia. "You do everything too fast."

"I know it, I know it!" he cried, passing his hand through his abundant dark hair and making it stand out in a picturesque shock. "I can't be slow if I try. There's something inside of me that drives me. A restless fiend!"

Cecilia gave a light laugh, and Rowland leaned forward in his hammock. He had placed himself in it at Bessie's request, and was playing that he was her baby and that she was rocking him to sleep. She sat beside him, swinging the hammock to and fro and singing a lullaby. When he raised himself she pushed him back and said that the baby must finish its nap. "But I want to see the gentleman with the fiend inside of him," said Rowland.

"What is a fiend?" Bessie demanded. "It's only Mr. Hudson."

"Very well, I want to see him."

"Oh, never mind him!" said Bessie, with the brevity of contempt.

"You speak as if you didn't like him."

"I don't!" Bessie affirmed, putting Rowland to bed again.

The hammock was swung at the end of the verandah, in the thickest shade of the climbing plants, and this fragment of dialogue had passed unnoticed. Rowland submitted a while longer to be cradled, and contented himself with listening to Mr. Hudson's voice. It was a soft and not altogether masculine organ, and was pitched on this occasion in a somewhat plaintive and pettish key. The young man's mood seemed fretful; he complained of the heat, of the dust, of a shoe that hurt him, of having gone on an errand a mile to the other side of the town and found the person he was in search of had left Northampton an hour before.

"Won't you have a cup of tea?" Cecilia asked. "Perhaps that will restore your equanimity."

"Ay, by keeping me awake all night!" said Hudson. "At the best, to go down to the office is like getting into a bath with the water frozen. With my nerves set on edge by a sleepless night I should sit and shiver at home. That's always charming for my mother."

"Your mother is well, I hope?"

"Oh, she's as usual."

"And Miss Garland?"

"She's as usual too. Every one, everything, is as usual. Nothing ever happens in this benighted town."

"I beg your pardon; things do happen sometimes," said Cecilia. "Here is a dear cousin of mine arrived on purpose to congratulate you on your statuette." And she called to Rowland to come and be introduced to Mr. Hudson. The young man sprang up with alacrity, and Rowland, coming forward to shake hands, had a good look at him in the light projected from the parlour window. Something seemed to shine out of Hudson's face as a warning against a "compliment" of the idle unpondered sort.

"Your statuette seems to me very good," Rowland said, gravely. "It has given me extreme pleasure."

"And my cousin knows what is good," said Cecilia. "He is a connoisseur."

Hudson smiled and stared. "A connoisseur?" he cried, laughing. "He is the first I have ever seen! Let me see what they look like;" and he drew Rowland nearer to the light. "Have they all such good heads as that? I should like to model yours."

"Pray, do," said Cecilia. "It will keep him a while. He is running off to Europe."

"Ah, to Europe!" Hudson exclaimed, with a melancholy cadence as they sat down. "Happy man!"

But the note seemed to Rowland to be struck rather at random, for he perceived no echo of it in the boyish garrulity of his later talk. Hudson was a tall slender young fellow, with a singularly mobile and intelligent face. Rowland was struck at first only with its responsive vivacity, but in a short time he perceived it was remarkably handsome. The features were admirably chiselled and finished, and a frank smile played over them as gracefully as a breeze among flowers. The fault of the young man's whole structure was an excessive want of breadth. The forehead, though it was high and rounded, was narrow; the jaw and the shoulders were narrow, and the result was an air of insufficient physical substance. But Mallet afterwards learned that this fair slim youth could draw indefinitely upon a fund of nervous force which outlasted and outwearied the endurance of many a sturdier temperament. And certainly there was life enough in his eye to furnish an immortality! It was a generous dark gray eye, in which there came and went a sort of kindling glow which would have made a ruder visage striking, and which gave at times to Hudson's harmonious face an altogether extraordinary beauty. There was to Rowland's sympathetic sense a slightly pitiful disparity between the young sculptor's delicate

countenance and the shabby gentility of his costume. He was dressed for a rural visit—a visit to a pretty woman. He was clad from head to foot in a white linen suit, which had never been remarkable for the felicity of its cut, and had now quite lost its vivifying and redeeming crispness. He wore a bright red cravat, passed through a ring altogether too splendid to be valuable; he pulled and twisted, as he sat, a pair of yellow kid gloves; he emphasised his conversation with great dashes and flourishes of a light silver-tipped walking-stick, and he kept constantly taking off and putting on one of those slouched sombreros which are the traditional property of the Virginian or Carolinian of romance. When his hat was on he was very picturesque, in spite of his mock elegance; and when it was off and he sat nursing it and turning it about and not knowing what to do with it, he could hardly be said to be awkward. He evidently had a natural relish for brilliant accessories, and he appropriated what came to his hand. This was visible in his talk, which abounded in the florid and sonorous. In conversation he was a colourist.

Rowland, who was but a moderate talker, sat by in silence, while Cecilia, who had told him that she desired his opinion upon her friend, used a good deal of characteristic finesse in leading the young man to disclose himself. She perfectly succeeded, and Hudson rattled away for an hour with a volubility in which boyish unconsciousness and manly shrewdness were singularly combined. He gave his opinion on twenty topics, he opened up an endless budget of local gossip, he described his repulsive routine at the office of Messrs. Striker and Spooner, counsellors at law, and he gave with great felicity and gusto an account of the annual boat race between Harvard and Yale, which he had lately witnessed at Worcester. He had looked at the straining oarsmen and the swaying crowd with the eye of the sculptor. Rowland was a good deal amused, and not a little interested. When-

ever Hudson uttered some peculiarly striking piece of youthful grandiloquence, Cecilia broke into a long, light, familiar laugh.

"What are you laughing at?" the young man then demanded. "Have I said anything so ridiculous?"

"Go on, go on," Cecilia replied. "You are too delicious! Show Mr. Mallet how Mr. Striker read the Declaration of Independence on the 4th of July."

Hudson, like most men with a turn for the plastic arts, was an excellent mimic, and he represented with a great deal of humour the accent and attitude of a pompous country lawyer sustaining the burden of this glorious episode of our national festival. The sonorous twang, the see-saw gestures, the patriotic pronunciation, were vividly reproduced. But Cecilia's manner and the young man's quick response ruffled a little poor Rowland's paternal conscience. He wondered whether his cousin were not sacrificing the faculty of reverence in her clever *protégé* to her need for amusement. Hudson made no serious rejoinder to Rowland's compliment on his statuette until he rose to go. Rowland wondered whether he had forgotten it, and supposed that the oversight was a sign of the natural self-sufficiency of genius. But Hudson stood a moment before he said good-night, twirled his sombrero, and hesitated for the first time. He gave Rowland a clear penetrating glance, and then with a wonderfully frank appealing smile—"You really meant," he asked, "what you said a while ago about that thing of mine? It is good—essentially good?"

"I really meant it," said Rowland, laying a kindly hand on his shoulder. "It is very good indeed. It is, as you say, essentially good. That is the beauty of it."

Hudson's eyes glowed and expanded; he looked at Rowland for some time in silence. "I have a notion you really know," he said at last. "But if you don't, it doesn't much matter."

"My cousin asked me to-day," said Cecilia, "whether I supposed you knew yourself how good it is."

Hudson stared, blushing a little. "Perhaps not!" he cried.

"Very likely," said Mallet. "I read in a book the other day that great talent in action—in fact the book said genius—is a kind of somnambulism. The artist performs great feats in a dream. We must not wake him up lest he should lose his balance."

"Oh, when he's back in bed again!" Hudson answered with a laugh. "Yes, call it a dream. It was a very happy one!"

"Tell me this," said Rowland. "Did you mean anything by your young Water-drinker? Does he represent an idea? Is he a symbol?"

Hudson raised his eyebrows and gently stroked his hair. "Why, he's youth, you know; he's innocence, he's health, he's strength, he's curiosity. Yes, he's a good many things."

"And is the cup also a symbol?"

"The cup is knowledge, pleasure, experience. Anything of that kind!"

"Well, he's guzzling in earnest," said Rowland.

Hudson gave a vigorous nod. "Ay, poor fellow, he's thirsty!" And on this he cried good-night, and bounded down the garden path.

"Well, what do you make of him?" asked Cecilia, returning a short time afterwards from a visit of investigation as to the sufficiency of Bessie's bedclothes.

"I confess I like him," said Rowland. "He's crude and immature—but there's stuff in him."

"He's a strange being," said Cecilia, musingly.

"Who are his people? what has been his education?" Rowland asked.

"He has had no education, beyond what he has picked up with little trouble for himself. His mother is a widow, of a Massachusetts country family, a little,

timid, tremulous woman who is always on pins and needles about her son. She had some property herself, and married a Virginian gentleman—an owner of lands and slaves. He turned out, I believe, a dreadful rake, and made great havoc in their fortune. Everything, or almost everything, melted away, including Mr. Hudson himself. This is literally true, for he drank himself to death. Ten years ago his wife was left a widow, with scanty means and a couple of growing boys. She paid her husband's debts as best she could, and came to establish herself here, where, by the death of a charitable relative, she had inherited an old-fashioned, ruinous house. Roderick, our friend, was her pride and joy; but Stephen, the elder, was her comfort and support. I remember him later; he was a plain-faced, sturdy, practical lad, very different from his brother, and in his way, I imagine, a very fine fellow. When the war broke out he found that the New England blood ran thicker in his veins than the Virginian, and immediately obtained a commission. He fell in some Western battle, and left his mother inconsolable. Roderick, however, has given her plenty to think about, and she has induced him by some mysterious art to take up a profession that he abhors, and for which he is about as fit as I am to drive a locomotive. He grew up *à la grâce de Dieu;* he was horribly spoiled. Three or four years ago he graduated at a small college in this neighbourhood, where, I am afraid, he had given a good deal more attention to novels and billiards than to mathematics and Greek. Since then he has been reading law at the rate of a page a day. If he is ever admitted to practice I am afraid my friendship will not avail to make me give him my business. Good, bad, or indifferent, the boy is an artist—an artist to his fingers' ends."

"Why, then," asked Rowland, "doesn't he deliberately take up the chisel?"

"For several reasons. In the first place, I don't

think he more than half suspects his talent. The flame is smouldering, but it is never fanned by the breath of criticism. He sees nothing, hears nothing, to help him to self-knowledge. He is hopelessly discontented, but he doesn't know where to look for help. Then his mother, as she one day confessed to me, has a holy horror of a profession which consists exclusively, as she supposes, in making figures of people without their clothes on. Sculpture, to her mind, is an insidious form of immorality, and for a young man of a passionate disposition she considers the law a much safer speculation. Her father was a judge, she has two brothers at the bar, and her elder son had made a very promising beginning in the same line. She wishes the tradition to be kept up. I am pretty sure the law won't make Roderick's fortune, and I am afraid it will spoil his temper."

"What sort of a temper is it?"

"One to be trusted, on the whole. It is quick, but it is generous. I have known it to breathe flame and fury at ten o'clock in the evening, and soft, sweet music early on the morrow. It's a very entertaining temper to observe. Fortunately, I can observe it dispassionately, for I am the only person in the place he has not quarrelled with."

"Has he, then, no society? Who is Miss Garland whom you asked about?"

"A young girl staying with his mother, a sort of far-away cousin; a good, plain girl, but not a person to delight a sculptor's eye. Roderick has a good share of the old Southern arrogance; he has the aristocratic temperament. He will have nothing to do with the small townspeople; he says they are 'ignoble.' He can't endure his mother's friends—the old ladies and the ministers and the tea-party people; they bore him to death. So he comes and lounges here, and rails at everything and every one."

This youthful scoffer reappeared a couple of evenings later, and confirmed the friendly feeling he had excited on Rowland's part. He was in an easier mood than before, he chattered less extravagantly, and asked Rowland a number of rather primitive questions about the condition of the fine arts in New York and Boston. Cecilia, when he had gone, said that this was the wholesome effect of Rowland's eulogy of his statuette. Roderick was acutely sensitive, and Rowland's intelligent praise had sobered him; he was ruminating the full-flavoured verdict of culture. Rowland took a great fancy to him, to his personal charm and his probable genius. He had an indefinable attraction—the something tender and divine of unspotted, exuberant, confident youth. The next day was Sunday, and Rowland proposed that they should take a long walk, and that Roderick should show him the country. The young man assented gleefully, and in the morning, as Rowland, at the garden gate, was giving his hostess God-speed on her way to church, he came striding along the grassy margin of the road, and out-whistling the music of the church bells. It was one of those lovely days of the last of August, when summer seems to balance in the scale with autumn. "Remember the day, and take care you rob no orchards," said Cecilia, as they separated.

The young men walked away at a steady pace, over hill and dale, through woods and fields, and at last found themselves on a grassy elevation studded with mossy rocks and red cedars. Just beneath them, in a great shining curve, flowed the generous Connecticut. They flung themselves on the grass and tossed stones into the river; they talked like old friends. Rowland lit a cigar, and Roderick refused one with a grimace of extravagant disgust. He thought them vile things; he didn't see how decent people could tolerate them. Rowland was amused—he wondered what it was that made this ill-mannered speech seem perfectly inoffensive on Roderick's

lips. He belonged to the race of mortals, to be pitied or envied according as we view the matter, who are not held to a strict account for their aggressions. Looking at him as he lay stretched in the shade, Rowland vaguely likened him to some beautiful, supple, restless, bright-eyed animal, whose motions should have no deeper warrant than the tremulous delicacy of its structure, and seem graceful even when they were most inconvenient. Rowland watched the shadows on Mount Holyoke, listened to the gurgle of the river, and sniffed the balsam of the pines. A gentle breeze had begun to tickle their summits, and brought the smell of the mown grass across from the elm-dotted river-meadows. He sat up beside his companion and looked away at the far-spreading view. It seemed to him beautiful, and suddenly a strange feeling of prospective regret took possession of him. Something seemed to tell him that later, in a foreign land, he should remember it with longing and regret.

"It's a wretched business," he said, "this virtual quarrel of ours with our own country, this everlasting impatience to get out of it. Is one's only safety, then, in flight? This is an American day, an American landscape, an American atmosphere. It certainly has its merits, and some day when I am shivering with ague in classic Italy I shall accuse myself of having slighted them."

Roderick kindled with a sympathetic glow, and declared that America was good enough for him, and that he had always thought it the duty of an honest citizen to stand by his own country and help it on. He had evidently thought nothing whatever about it—he was launching his doctrine on the inspiration of the moment. The doctrine expanded with the occasion, and he declared that he was above all an advocate for American art. He didn't see why we shouldn't produce the greatest works in the world. We were the biggest people, and we ought to have the biggest conceptions. The biggest

conceptions, of course, would bring forth in time the biggest performances. We had only to be true to ourselves, to pitch in and not be afraid, to fling Imitation overboard and fix our eyes upon our National Individuality. "I declare," he cried, "there's a career for a man, and I have twenty minds to embrace it on the spot—to be the typical, original, national American artist! It's inspiring!"

Rowland burst out laughing, and told him that he liked his practice better than his theory, and that a saner impulse than this had inspired his little Water-drinker. Roderick took no offence, and three minutes afterwards was talking volubly of some humbler theme—only half heeded by his companion, who had returned to his cogitations. At last Rowland delivered himself of the upshot of these reflections. "How should you like," he suddenly demanded, "to go to Rome?"

Hudson stared, and with a laugh which speedily consigned our National Individuality to perdition, responded that he should like it reasonably well. "And I should like by the same token," he added, "to go to Athens, to Constantinople, to Damascus, to the holy city of Benares, where there is a golden statue of Brahma twenty feet tall."

"No," said Rowland, soberly, "if you were to go to Rome you should settle down and work. Athens might help you, but for the present I shouldn't recommend Benares."

"It will be time to arrange details when I pack my trunk," said Hudson.

"If you mean to turn sculptor the sooner you pack your trunk the better."

"Oh, but I'm a practical man! What is the smallest sum per annum on which one can keep alive the sacred fire?"

"What is the largest sum at your disposal?"

Roderick stroked his light moustache, gave it a twist, and then announced with mock pomposity—"Three hundred dollars!"

"The money question could be arranged," said Rowland. "There are ways of raising money."

"I should like to know a few! I never yet discovered one."

"One of them consists," said Rowland, "in having a friend with a good deal more than he wants and not being too proud to accept a part of it."

Roderick stared a moment and his face flushed. "Do you mean—do you mean?——" He stammered. He was greatly excited.

Rowland got up, blushing a little, and Roderick sprang to his feet. "In three words, if you are to be a sculptor you ought to go to Rome and study the antique. To go to Rome you need money. I am fond of fine statues, but unfortunately I can't make them myself. I have to order them. I order a dozen from you, to be executed at your convenience. To help you I pay you in advance."

Roderick pushed off his hat and pressed his forehead, still gazing at his companion. "You believe in me!" he cried at last.

"Allow me to explain," said Rowland. "I believe in you if you are prepared to work and to wait and to struggle and to exercise a great many virtues. And then I am afraid to say it, lest I should disturb you more than I should help you. You must decide for yourself. I simply offer you an opportunity."

Hudson stood for some time, profoundly meditative. "You have not seen my other things," he said suddenly. "Come and look at them."

"Now?"

"Yes, we will walk home. We will settle the question."

He passed his hand through Rowland's arm and they retraced their steps. They reached the town and made their way along a broad country street, dusky with the shade of magnificent elms. Rowland felt his companion's

arm trembling in his own. They stopped at a large white house flanked with melancholy hemlocks, and passed through a little front garden paved with moss-coated bricks and ornamented with parterres bordered with high box edges. The mansion had an air of antiquated dignity, but it had seen its best days and evidently sheltered a shrunken household. Mrs. Hudson, Rowland was sure, might be seen in the garden of a morning, in a white apron and a pair of old gloves, engaged in frugal horticulture. Roderick's studio was behind, in the basement; a large empty room, with the paper peeling off the walls. This represented, in the fashion of fifty years ago, a series of small fantastic landscapes of a hideous pattern, and the young sculptor had presumably torn it away in great scraps, in moments of æsthetic exasperation. On a board in a corner was a heap of clay, and on the floor, against the wall, stood some dozen medallions, busts, and figures, in various stages of completion. To exhibit them Roderick had to place them one by one on the end of a long packing-box, which served as a pedestal. He did so silently, making no explanations, and looking at them himself with a strange air of quickened curiosity. Most of the things were portraits, and the three at which he looked longest were finished busts. One was a colossal head of a negro, tossed back, defiant, with distended nostrils; one was the portrait of a young man whom Rowland immediately perceived by the resemblance to be his lost brother; the last represented a gentleman with a pointed nose, a long close-shaven upper lip, and a tuft on the end of his chin. This was a face peculiarly unadapted to sculpture; but as a piece of modelling it was the best, and it was admirable. It reminded Rowland, in its homely veracity, its artless artfulness, of the works of the early Italian Renaissance. On the pedestal was cut the name—Barnaby Striker, Esq. Rowland remembered that this was the appellation of the legal luminary from whom his companion had

undertaken to borrow a reflected ray, and although in the bust there was nothing grossly satirical, it betrayed comically to one who could relish the secret that the features of the original had often been scanned with an irritated eye. Besides these there were several rough studies of the nude and two or three figures of a fanciful kind. The most noticeable (and it had singular beauty) was a small modelled design for a sepulchral monument; that evidently of Stephen Hudson. The young soldier lay sleeping eternally with his hand on his sword—like an old crusader in a Gothic cathedral.

Rowland made no haste to pronounce; too much depended on his judgment. "Upon my word," cried Hudson at last, "they seem to me very good!"

And in truth, as Rowland looked he saw they were good. They were youthful, awkward, ignorant; the effort often was more apparent than the success. But the effort was signally powerful and intelligent; it seemed to Rowland that it might easily hit the mark. Here and there the mark had been hit with a masterly ring. Rowland turned to his companion, who stood with his hands in his pockets and his hair very much crumpled, looking at him askance. The light of admiration was in Rowland's eyes, and it speedily kindled a wonderful illumination on Hudson's handsome brow. Rowland said at last simply, "You have only to work!"

"I think I know what that means," Roderick answered. He turned away, threw himself on a rickety chair, and sat for some moments with his elbows on his knees and his head in his hands. "Work—work?" he said at last, looking up; "ah, if I could only begin!" He glanced round the room a moment, and his eye encountered on the mantel-shelf the vivid physiognomy of Mr. Barnaby Striker. His smile vanished—he stared at it with an air of concentrated enmity. "I want to begin," he cried, "and I can't make a better beginning than this! Good-bye, Mr. Barnaby Striker!" He strode

across the room, seized a hammer that lay at hand, and before Rowland could interfere, in the interest of art if not of morals, dealt a merciless blow upon Mr. Striker's skull. The bust cracked into a dozen pieces, which toppled with a great crash upon the floor. Rowland relished neither the destruction of the image nor his companion's look in working it, but as he was about to express his displeasure the door opened and gave passage to a young girl. She came in with a rapid step and startled face, as if she had been alarmed by the noise. Seeing the heap of shattered clay and the hammer in Roderick's hand, she gave a cry of horror. Her voice died away when she perceived that Rowland was a stranger, but she murmured reproachfully, "Why, Roderick, what have you done?"

Roderick gave a joyous kick to the shapeless fragments. "I have driven the money-changers out of the temple!" he cried.

The traces retained shape enough to be recognised, and she gave a little moan of pity. She seemed not to understand the young man's allegory, but yet to feel that it pointed to some great purpose, which must be an evil one from being expressed in such a lawless fashion, and to perceive that Rowland was in some way accountable for it. She looked at him with a sharp frank mistrust, and turned away through the open door. Rowland looked after her with quickened interest.

## III.

EARLY on the morrow he received a visit from his new friend. Roderick was in a state of extreme exhilaration, tempered, however, by a certain amount of righteous wrath. He had had a domestic struggle, but he had

remained master of the situation. He had shaken the dust of Mr. Striker's office from his feet.

"I had it out last night with my mother," he said. "I dreaded the scene, for she takes things terribly hard. She doesn't scold nor storm, and she doesn't argue nor insist. She sits with her eyes full of tears that never fall, and looks at me, when I vex her, as if I were a monster of depravity. And the trouble is that I was born to vex her. She doesn't trust me; she never has and she never will. I don't know what I have done to set her against me, but ever since I can remember I have been looked at with tears. The trouble is," he went on, giving a twist to his moustache, "I have been too great a mollycoddle. I have been sprawling all my days by the maternal fireside, and my dear mother has grown used to bullying me. I have made myself cheap! If I am not in my bed by eleven o'clock, the cook is sent out to explore with a lantern. When I think of it, I despise my docility. It's rather a hard fate, to live like a saint and to pass for a sinner. I should like for six months to lead Mrs. Hudson the life some fellows lead their mothers!"

"Allow me to believe," said Rowland, "that you would like nothing of the sort. If you have been a good boy, don't spoil it by pretending you don't like it. You have been very happy in spite of your virtues, and there are worse fates in the world than being loved too well. I have not had the pleasure of seeing your mother, but I will lay you a wager that this is where the shoe pinches. She is passionately fond of you, and her hopes, like all intense hopes, keep trembling into fears." Rowland, as he spoke, had an instinctive vision of how this beautiful youth must be loved by his female relatives.

Roderick frowned, and with an impatient gesture, "I do her justice," he cried—"may she never do me less!" Then after a moment's hesitation, "I will tell you the

perfect truth," he went on; "I have to fill a double place. I have to be my brother as well as myself. It's a good deal to ask of a man, especially when he has so little talent as I for being what he is not. When we were both young together I was the curled darling. I had the silver mug and the biggest piece of pudding, and I stayed in-doors to be kissed by the ladies while he made mud-pies in the garden. In fact he was worth fifty of me! When he was brought home from Vicksburg with a piece of shell in his skull, my poor mother began to think she hadn't loved him enough. I remember, as she hung round my neck sobbing, before his coffin, she told me that I must be to her everything that he would have been. I made no end of vows, but I haven't kept them all. I have been very different from Stephen. I have been idle, restless, egotistical, discontented. I have done no harm, I believe, but I have done no good. My brother, if he had lived, would have made fifty thousand dollars, and had the parlour done up. My mother, brooding night and day on her bereavement, has come to fix her ideal in little attentions of that sort. Judged by that standard I'm nowhere."

Rowland was at a loss what to believe of this account of his friend's domestic circumstances; it was plaintive, yet it seemed to him rather rough. "You must lose no time in making a masterpiece," he answered; "then with the proceeds you can do up the whole house."

"So I have told her; but she only half believes in the thing. She can see no good in my making statues; they seem to her a snare of the enemy. She would fain see me all my life tethered to the law, like a browsing goat to a stake. In that way I am in sight. 'It's a more regular occupation!'—that's all I can get out of her. A more regular damnation! Is it a fact that artists in general are such wicked men? I never had the pleasure of knowing one, so I couldn't refute her with an example. She had the advantage of me, because

she formerly knew a portrait-painter at Richmond, who did her miniature in black lace mittens (you may see it on the parlour table), who used to drink raw brandy and beat his wife. I promised her that whatever I might do to my wife I would never beat my mother, and that as for brandy, raw or diluted, I detested it. She sat silently crying for an hour, during which I expended treasures of eloquence. It's a good thing to have to take stock of one's intentions, and I assure you, as I pleaded my cause, I was most agreeably impressed with the elevated character of my own. I kissed her solemnly at last, and told her that I had said everything, and that she must make the best of it. This morning she has dried her eyes, but I warrant you it isn't a cheerful house. I long to be out of it!"

"I am extremely sorry to have made such a rumpus," said Rowland. "I owe your mother some amends; will it be possible for me to see her?"

"If you will see her, it will smooth matters vastly; though, to tell the truth, she will need all her courage to face you, for she considers you an agent of the foul fiend. She doesn't see why you should have come here and set me by the ears: you are made to ruin young law students and desolate doting mothers. I leave it to you personally answer these charges. You see, what she can't for-ve—what she will not really ever forgive—is your ing me off to Rome. Rome is an evil word in my ther's vocabulary, to be said in a whisper, as you'd 'damnation.' Northampton is in the centre of istendom, and Rome far away in outlying dusk, into ch it can do no proper moral man any good to pene-. And there was I but yesterday a regular attendant at repository of every virtue, Mr. Striker's office!"

And does Mr. Striker know of your decision?" Rowland.

To a certainty! Mr. Striker, you must know, is mply a good-natured attorney who lets me dog's-

ear his law-books. He's a particular friend and general adviser. He looks after my mother's property, and kindly consents to regard me as part of it. Our opinions have always been painfully divergent, but I freely forgive him his zealous attempts to unscrew my headpiece and set it on another way. He never understood me, and it was useless to try to make him. We speak a different language—we are made of a different clay. I had a fit of rage yesterday, when I smashed his bust, at the thought of all the bad blood he had stirred up in me; it did me good, and it's all over now. I don't hate him any more; I am rather sorry for him. See how you have improved me! I must have seemed to him wilfully, wickedly stupid, and I am sure he only tolerated me on account of his great regard for my mother. This morning I grasped the bull by the horns. I took an armful of law-books that have been gathering the dust in my room for the last year and a half, and presented myself at the office. 'Allow me to put these back in their places,' I said. 'I shall never have need for them more—never more, never more, never more!' 'So you have learned everything they contain?' says the great Striker, leering over his spectacles; 'better late than never!' 'I have learned nothing that you can teach me,' I cried. 'But I shall tax your patience no longer. I am going to be a sculptor. I am going to Rome. I won't bid you good-bye just yet; I shall see you again. But I bid good-bye here with enthusiasm to these four detested walls—to this living tomb! I didn't know till now how I hated the place! My compliments to Mr. Spooner, and my thanks for all you have not made of me!'"

"I am glad to know you are to see Mr. Striker again," Rowland answered, correcting a primary inclination to smile. "You certainly owe him a respectful farewell, even if he has not understood you. I confess you rather puzzle me. There is another person," he presently

added, "whose opinion as to your new career I should like to know. What does Miss Garland think?"

Hudson looked at him keenly, with a slight blush. Then with a conscious smile, "What makes you suppose she thinks anything?" he asked.

"Because, though I saw her but for a moment yesterday, she struck me as a very intelligent girl, and I am sure she has opinions."

The smile on Roderick's mobile face passed rapidly into a frown. "Oh, she thinks what I think!" he answered.

Before the two young men separated Rowland attempted to give as harmonious a shape as possible to his companion's future. "I have launched you, as I may say," he said; "and I feel as if I ought to see you into port. I am older than you and know the world better, and it seems well that we should voyage a while together. It's on my conscience that I ought to take you to Rome, walk you through the Vatican, and then lock you up with a heap of clay. I sail on the 5th of September; can you make your preparations to start with me?"

Roderick assented to all this with an air of candid confidence in his friend's wisdom that expressed more than formal pledges. "I have no preparations to make," he said with a smile, raising his arms and letting them ll, as if to indicate his unencumbered condition. "What am to take with me I carry here!" and he tapped his rehead.

"Happy man!" murmured Rowland with a sigh, nking of the light stowage in his own organism, in region indicated by Roderick, and of the heavy one deposit at his banker's, of bags and boxes.

When his companion had left him he went in search ecilia. She was sitting at work at a shady window, welcomed him to a low chintz-covered chair. He some time thoughtfully snipping wools with her rs; he expected criticism, and he was preparing a

rejoinder. At last he told her of Roderick's decision and of his own part in the matter. Cecilia, besides an extreme surprise, exhibited a certain fine displeasure at his not having asked her advice.

"What would you have said if I had?" he demanded.

"I should have said in the first place, 'Oh, for pity's sake, don't carry off the person in all Northampton who amuses me most!' I should have said in the second place, 'Nonsense! the boy is doing very well. Let well alone!'"

"That in the first five minutes. What would you have said later?"

"That for a man who is generally averse to meddling, you were suddenly rather officious."

Rowland's countenance fell; he frowned in silence. Cecilia looked at him askance; gradually the spark of irritation faded from her eye.

"Excuse my sharpness," she resumed at last. "But I am literally in despair at losing Roderick Hudson. His visits in the evening, for the past year, have kept me alive. They have given a point to a very dull life—a kind of silver-tip to days that seemed made of a baser metal. I don't say he is a phœnix—but I liked to see him. Of course, however, that I shall miss him sadly is not a reason for his not going to seek his fortune. Men must work and women must weep!"

"Decidedly not!" said Rowland, with a good deal of emphasis. He had suspected from the first hour of his stay that Cecilia had a private satisfaction, and he discovered that she found it in Hudson's lounging visits and boyish chatter. Now he wondered whether, judiciously viewed, her gain in the matter were not her young friend's loss. It was evident that Cecilia was not judicious, and that her good sense, habitually rigid under the demands of domestic economy, indulged itself with a certain agreeable laxity on this particular point. She liked her young friend just as he was; she humoured him, flattered him,

laughed at him, caressed him—did everything but advise him. It was a flirtation without the benefits of a flirtation. She was too old to let him fall in love with her, which might have done him good; and her inclination was to keep him young, so that the nonsense he talked might never transgress a certain line. It was quite conceivable that poor Cecilia should relish a pastime; but if one had philanthropically embraced the idea that something considerable might be made of Roderick, it was impossible not to see that her friendship was not what might be called tonic. So Rowland reflected, in the glow of an almost creative ardour. There was a later time when he would have been grateful if Hudson's susceptibility to the relaxing influence of lovely women might have been limited to such inexpensive tribute as he rendered the excellent Cecilia.

"I only wish to remind you," she went on, "that you are likely to have your hands full."

"I have thought of that, and I rather like the idea; liking as I do the man. I told you the other day, you know, that I longed to have something on my hands. When it first occurred to me that I might start our young friend on the path of glory, I felt as if I had an unimpeachable inspiration. Then I remembered there were dangers and difficulties, and asked myself whether I had a right to drag him out of his obscurity. My notion of his really having a great talent answered the question. He is made to do the things that we are the better for having. I can't do such things myself, but when I see a young man of genius standing helpless and hopeless for want of capital, I feel—and it's no affectation of humility, I assure you—as if it would give at least a reflected usefulness to my own life to offer him his opportunity."

"In the name of the general public I suppose I ought to thank you. But I want first of all to profit myself. You guarantee us, at any rate, I hope, the masterpieces?"

"A masterpiece a year," said Rowland, smiling, "for the next quarter of a century."

"It seems to me that we have a right to ask more—to demand that you guarantee us not only the development of the artist but the security of the man."

Rowland became grave again. "His security?"

"His moral, his sentimental security. Here, you see, it's perfect. We are all under a tacit compact to keep him quiet. Perhaps you believe in the necessary turbulence of genius, and you intend to enjoin upon your *protégé* the importance of cultivating his passions."

"On the contrary, I believe that a man of genius owes as much deference to his passions as any other man, but not a particle more, and I confess I have a strong conviction that the artist is better for leading a quiet life. That is what I shall preach to my *protégé*, as you call him, by example as well as by precept. You evidently believe," he added in a moment, "that he will lead me a dance!"

"No, I prophesy nothing. I only think that circumstances, with our young man, have a great influence; as is proved by the fact that although he has been fuming and fretting here for the last five years, he has nevertheless managed to make the best of it, and found it easy, on the whole, to vegetate. Transplanted to Rome, I fancy he will put forth some wonderful flowers. I should like vastly to see the change. You must write me about it from stage to stage. I hope with all my heart that the fruit will be proportionate to the foliage. Don't think me a bird of ill omen; only remember that you will be held to a strict account."

"A man should make the most of himself, and be helped if he needs help," Rowland answered, after a long pause. "Of course when a body begins to expand, there comes in the possibility of bursting; but I nevertheless approve of a certain tension of one's being. It's what a man is meant for. And then I believe in the essential salubrity of genius—true genius."

"Very good," said Cecilia, with an air of resignation which made Rowland for the moment seem to himself culpably eager. "We will drink, then, to-day at dinner to the health of our friend!"

Having it much at heart to convince Mrs. Hudson of the purity of his intentions, Rowland waited upon her that evening. He was ushered into a large parlour, which by the light of a couple of candles he perceived to be very meagrely furnished and very tenderly and sparingly used. The windows were open to the air of the summer night, and a circle of three persons was temporarily awed into silence by his appearance. One of these was Mrs. Hudson, who was sitting at one of the windows, empty-handed save for the pocket-handkerchief in her lap, which was held with an air of familiarity with its sadder uses. Near her, on the sofa, half sitting, half lounging, in the attitude of a visitor outstaying ceremony, with one long leg flung over the other and a large foot in a clumsy boot swinging to and fro continually, was a lean, sandy-haired gentleman whom Rowland recognised as the original of the portrait of Mr. Barnaby Striker. At the table, near the candles, busy with a substantial piece of needlework, sat the young girl of whom he had had a moment's quickened glimpse in Roderick's studio, and whom he had learned to be Miss Garland, his companion's kinswoman. This young lady's limpid penetrating gaze was the most effective greeting he received. Mrs. Hudson rose with a soft, vague sound of distress, and stood looking at him shrinkingly and waveringly, as if she were sorely tempted to retreat through the open window. Mr. Striker swung his long leg a trifle defiantly. No one evidently was used to offering hollow welcomes or telling polite fibs. Rowland introduced himself; he had come, he might say, upon business.

"Yes," said Mrs. Hudson, tremulously; "I know—my son has told me. I suppose it is better I should see you. Perhaps you will take a seat?"

With this invitation Rowland prepared to comply, and turning, grasped the first chair that offered itself.

"Not that one," said a full grave voice; whereupon he perceived that a thick skein of sewing-silk had been suspended and entangled over the back for the purpose of being wound on reels. He felt the least bit irritated at the curtness of the warning, coming as it did from a young woman whose countenance he had mentally pronounced interesting, and with regard to whom he was conscious of the germ of the inevitable desire to produce a responsive interest. And then he thought it would break the ice to say something playfully urbane.

"Oh, you should let me take the chair," he answered, "and have the pleasure of holding the skein myself!"

For all reply to this sally he received a stare of undisguised amazement from Miss Garland, who then looked across at Mrs. Hudson with a glance which plainly said, "You see he's quite the insinuating foreigner we feared." The elder lady, however, sat with her eyes fixed on the ground and her two hands tightly clasped. But as regards Mrs. Hudson, Rowland felt much more compassion than resentment; her attitude was not coldness, it was a kind of dread, almost a terror. She was a small eager woman, with a pale troubled face, which added to her apparent age. After looking at her for some minutes Rowland saw that she was still young and that she must have been a very girlish bride. She had been a pretty one too, though she probably had looked terribly frightened at the altar. She was very delicately shaped, and Roderick had come honestly by his physical slimness and elegance. She wore no cap, and her flaxen hair, which was of extraordinary fineness, was smoothed and confined with Puritanic precision. She was excessively shy, and evidently very humble-minded; it was singular to see a woman to whom the experience of life had conveyed such scanty reassurance. Rowland began immediately to like her, and to feel impatient to persuade

her that there was no harm in him. He foresaw that she would be easy to persuade, and that a benevolent conversational tone would probably make her pass fluttering from distrust into an oppressive extreme of confidence. But he had an indefinable sense that the person who was testing that strong young eyesight of hers in the dim candle-light was less readily beguiled from her mysterious feminine preconceptions. Miss Garland, according to Cecilia's judgment, as Rowland remembered, had not a countenance to inspire a sculptor; but it seemed to Rowland that her countenance might fairly inspire a man whose relation to the beautiful was amateurish. She was not pretty, as the eye of habit judges prettiness, but when you made the observation you somehow failed to set it down against her, for you had already passed from measuring contours to tracing meanings. In Mary Garland's face there were many possible ones, and they gave you the more to think about that it was not—like Roderick Hudson's, for instance—a quick and mobile face, over which expression flickered like a candle in a wind. They followed each other slowly, distinctly, sincerely, and you might almost have fancied that, as they came and went, they gave her a sort of pain. She was tall and slender, and had an air of maidenly strength and decision. She had a broad forehead and dark eyebrows, a trifle thicker than those of classic beauties; her gray eye was clear but not brilliant, and her features were bravely irregular. Her mouth enabled her smile—which was the principal grace of her physiognomy—to display itself with magnificent amplitude. Rowland, indeed, had not yet seen this smile in operation; but something assured him that her rigid gravity had a radiant counterpart. She wore a scanty white dress, and had a nameless rustic, provincial air; she looked like a distinguished villager. She was evidently a girl of a great personal force, but she lacked pliancy. She was hemming a kitchen towel with the aid of a large steel thimble. She

bent her serious eyes at last on the work again, and let Rowland explain himself.

"I have become suddenly so very intimate with your son," he said at last, addressing himself to Mrs. Hudson, "that it seems proper I should make your acquaintance."

"Very proper," murmured the poor lady, and after a moment's hesitation was on the point of adding something more, but Mr. Striker here interposed, after a prefatory clearance of the throat:

"I should like to take the liberty of addressing you a simple question! For how long a period of time have you been acquainted with our young friend?" He continued to kick the air, but his head was thrown back and his eyes fixed on the opposite wall as if to avert themselves from the spectacle of Rowland's inevitable confusion.

"A very short time, I confess. Hardly three days."

"And yet you call yourself intimate, eh? I have been seeing Mr. Roderick daily these three years, and yet it was only this morning that I felt as if I had at last the right to say that I knew him. We had a few moments' conversation in my office which supplied the missing links in the evidence. So that now I do venture to say I'm acquainted with Mr. Roderick! But wait three years, sir, like me!" and Mr. Striker laughed, with a closed mouth and a noiseless shake of all his long person.

Mrs. Hudson smiled confusedly, at hazard; Miss Garland kept her eyes on her stitches. But it seemed to Rowland that the latter coloured a little. "Oh, in three years, of course," he said, "we shall know each other better. Before many years are over, madam," he pursued, "I expect the world to know him. I expect him to be a great man!"

Mrs. Hudson looked at first as if this could be but an insidious device for increasing her distress by the assistance of irony. Then reassured little by little by Row-

land's frank smile, she gave him an appealing glance and a timorous "Really?"

But before Rowland could respond, Mr. Striker again intervened. "Do I fully apprehend your expression?" he asked. "Our young friend is to become *a great man!*"

"A great artist, I hope," said Rowland.

"This is a new and interesting view," said Mr. Striker, with an assumption of judicial calmness. "We have had hopes for Mr. Roderick, but I confess that if I have rightly understood them they stopped short of greatness. We shouldn't have taken the responsibility of claiming it for him. What do you say, ladies? We all feel about him here—his mother, Miss Garland, and myself—as if his merits were rather in the line of the"—and Mr. Striker waved his hand with a series of fantastic flourishes in the air—"of the light ornamental!" Mr. Striker bore his recalcitrant pupil a grudge; yet he was evidently trying both to be fair and to respect the susceptibilities of his companions. But he was unversed in the mysterious processes of feminine emotion. Ten minutes before there had been a general harmony of sombre views; but on hearing Roderick's limitations thus distinctly formulated to a stranger, the two ladies mutely protested. Mrs. Hudson uttered a short faint sigh, and Miss Garland raised her eyes toward their advocate and visited him with a short cold glance.

"I am afraid, Mrs. Hudson," Rowland pursued, evading the discussion of Roderick's possible greatness, "that you don't at all thank me for stirring up your son's ambition for objects that lead him so far from home. I suspect I have made you my enemy."

Mrs. Hudson covered her mouth with her finger-tips, and looked painfully perplexed between the desire to confess the truth and the fear of being impolite. "My cousin is no one's enemy," Miss Garland hereupon declared gently, but with that same fine deliberateness with

which she had made Rowland relax his grasp of the chair.

"Does she leave that to you?" Rowland ventured to ask, with a smile.

"We are inspired with none but Christian sentiments," said Mr. Striker; "Miss Garland perhaps most of all. Miss Garland," and Mr. Striker waved his hand again as if to perform an introduction which had been regrettably omitted, "is the daughter of a minister, the granddaughter of a minister, the sister of a minister." Rowland bowed deferentially, and the young girl went on with her sewing, with nothing apparently either of embarrassment or elation at the promulgation of these facts. Mr. Striker continued—"Mrs. Hudson, I see, is too deeply agitated to converse with you freely. She will allow me to address you a few questions. Would you kindly inform her as exactly as possible just what you propose to do with her son?"

The poor lady fixed her eyes appealingly on Rowland's face, and seemed to say that Mr. Striker had spoken her desire, though she herself would have expressed it less defiantly. But Rowland saw in Mr. Striker's many-wrinkled light blue eye, shrewd at once and good-natured, that he had no intention of defiance, and that he was simply pompous and conceited and sarcastically compassionate of any view of things in which Roderick Hudson was regarded in a serious light.

"Do, my dear madam?" demanded Rowland. "I don't propose to do anything. He must do for himself. I simply offer him the chance. He is to study, to work—hard, I hope."

"Not too hard, please," murmured Mrs. Hudson, pleadingly, wheeling about from recent visions of dangerous leisure. "He's not very strong, and I am afraid the climate of Europe is very relaxing."

"Ah, study?" repeated Mr. Striker. "To what line of study is he to direct his attention?" Then suddenly,

with an impulse of disinterested curiosity on his own account, "How do you study sculpture, anyhow?"

"By looking at models and imitating them."

"At models, eh? To what kind of models do you refer?"

"To the antique, in the first place."

"Ah, the antique," repeated Mr. Striker with a jocose intonation. "Do you hear, madam? Roderick is going off to Europe to learn to imitate the antique."

"I suppose it's all right," said Mrs. Hudson, twisting herself in a sort of delicate anguish.

"An antique, as I understand it," the lawyer continued, "is an image of a pagan deity, with considerable dirt sticking to it, and no arms, no nose, and no clothing. A precious model, certainly!"

"That's a very good description of many," said Rowland, with a laugh.

"Mercy! Truly?" asked Mrs. Hudson, borrowing courage from his urbanity.

"But a sculptor's studies, you intimate, are not confined to the antique," Mr. Striker resumed. "After he has been looking three or four years at the objects I describe——"

"He studies the living model," said Rowland.

"Does it take three or four years?" asked Mrs. Hudson, imploringly.

"That depends upon the artist's aptitude. After twenty years a real artist is still studying."

"Oh, my poor boy!" moaned Mrs. Hudson, finding the prospect, under every light, still terrible.

"Now this study of the living model," Mr. Striker pursued. "Give Mrs. Hudson a sketch of that."

"Oh dear, no!" cried Mrs. Hudson, shrinkingly.

"That too," said Rowland, "is one of the reasons for studying in Rome. It's a handsome race, you know, and you find very well-made people."

"I suppose they're no better made than a good tough

Yankee," objected Mr. Striker, transposing his interminable legs. "The same God made us!"

"Surely," sighed Mrs. Hudson, but with a questioning glance at her visitor which showed that she had already begun to concede much weight to his opinion. Rowland hastened to express his assent to Mr. Striker's proposition.

Miss Garland looked up, and, after a moment's hesitation—"Are the Roman women very beautiful?" she asked.

Rowland too, in answering, hesitated; he was looking straight at the young girl. "On the whole, I prefer ours," he said.

She had dropped her work in her lap; her hands were crossed upon it, her head thrown a little back. She had evidently expected a more impersonal answer, and she was dissatisfied. For an instant she seemed inclined to make a rejoinder, but she slowly picked up her work in silence, and drew her stitches again.

Rowland had for the second time the feeling that she judged him to be a person of a disagreeably sophisticated tone. He noticed, too, that the kitchen towel she was hemming was terribly coarse. And yet his answer had a resonant inward echo, and he repeated to himself, "Yes, on the whole, I prefer ours."

"Well, these models," began Mr. Striker. "You put them into an attitude, I suppose?"

"An attitude, exactly."

"And then you sit down and look at them?"

"You must not sit too long. You must go at your clay and try to build up something that looks like them."

"Well, there you are with your model in an attitude on one side, yourself in an attitude too, I suppose, on the other, and your pile of clay in the middle, building up, as you say. So you pass the morning. After that I hope you go out and take a walk and rest from your exertions."

"Unquestionably. But to a sculptor who loves his work there is no time lost. Everything he looks at teaches or suggests something."

"That's a tempting doctrine to young men with a taste for sitting by the hour with the page unturned, watching the flies buzz, or the frost melt on the window-pane. Our young friend in this way must have laid up stores of information which I never suspected!"

"It is very possible," said Rowland, with an unresentful smile, "that he will prove some day the completer artist for some of those lazy reveries."

This theory was apparently very grateful to Mrs. Hudson, who had never had the case put for her son with such ingenious hopefulness, and who found herself disrelishing the singular situation of seeming to side against her own flesh and blood with a lawyer whose conversational tone betrayed the habit of cross-questioning.

"My son, then," she ventured to ask, "my son has great—what you would call great powers?"

"To my sense very great powers."

Poor Mrs. Hudson actually smiled, broadly, gleefully, and glanced at Miss Garland as if to invite her to do likewise. But the young girl's face remained as serious as the eastern sky when the opposite sunset is too feeble to make it glow. "Do you really know?" she asked, looking at Rowland.

"One can't *know* in such a matter save after proof, and proof takes time. But one can believe."

"And you believe?"

"I believe."

But even then Miss Garland vouchsafed no smile; her face became graver than ever.

"Well, well," said Mrs. Hudson, "we must hope that it is all for the best."

Mr. Striker eyed his old friend for a moment with a look of some displeasure; he saw that this was but a cunning feminine imitation of resignation, and that,

through some untraceable process of transition, she was now taking more comfort in the opinions of this sophistical stranger than in his own tough dogmas. He rose to his feet, without pulling down his waistcoat, but with a wrinkled grin at the inconsistency of women. "Well, sir, Mr. Roderick's powers are nothing to me," he said, "no, nor the use he makes of them. Good or bad, he's no son of mine. But in a friendly way I'm glad to hear so fine an account of him. I'm glad, madam, you're so satisfied with the prospect. Affection, sir, you see, must have its guarantees!" He paused a moment, stroking his beard, with his head inclined and one eye half closed, looking at Rowland. The look was grotesque, but it was significant, and it puzzled Rowland more than it amused him. "I suppose you are a very brilliant young man," he went on, "very enlightened, very cultivated, quite up to the mark in the fine arts and all that sort of thing. I'm a plain practical old boy, content to follow an honourable profession in a free country. I didn't go off to the Old World to learn my business; no one took me by the hand; I had to grease my wheels myself, and such as I am I'm a self-made man, every inch of me! Well, if our young friend is booked for fame and fortune I don't suppose his going to Rome will stop him. But, mind you, it won't help him such a long way either. If you have undertaken to put him through, there's a thing or two you had better remember. The crop we gather depends upon the seed we sow. He may be the biggest genius of the age; his potatoes won't come up without his hoeing them. If he takes things so almighty easy as —well, as one or two young fellows of genius I've had under my eye—his produce will never gain the prize. Take the word for it of a man who has made his way inch by inch and doesn't believe that we wake up to find our work done because we have lain all night a-dreaming of it; anything worth doing is devilish hard to do! If your young gentleman finds things easy and has a good

time of it and says he likes the life, it's a sign that—as I may say—you had better step round to the office and look at the books. That's all I desire to remark. No offence intended. I hope you'll have a first-rate time."

Rowland could honestly reply that this seemed pregnant sense, and he offered Mr. Striker a friendly hand-shake as the latter withdrew. But Mr. Striker's rather grim view of matters cast a momentary shadow on his companions, and Mrs. Hudson seemed to feel that it necessitated between them some little friendly agreement not to be overawed.

Rowland sat for some time longer, partly because he wished to please the two women and partly because he was strangely pleased himself. There was something touching in their worldly fears and diffident hopes, something almost terrible in the way poor little Mrs. Hudson seemed to flutter and quiver with intense maternal passion. She put forth one timid conversational venture after another, and asked Rowland a number of questions about himself, his age, his family, his occupations, his tastes, his religious opinions. Rowland had an odd feeling at last that she had begun to believe him very exemplary, and that she might make later some perturbing discovery. He tried, therefore, to invent something that would prepare her to find him fallible. But he could think of nothing. It only seemed to him that Miss Garland secretly mistrusted him, and that he must leave her to render him the service, after he had gone, of making him the object of a little conscientious derogation. Mrs. Hudson talked with low-voiced eagerness about her son.

"He's very lovable, sir, I assure you. When you come to know him you will find him very lovable. He's a little spoiled, of course; he has always done with me as he pleased; but he's a good boy, I am sure he's a good boy. And every one thinks him very attractive: I am sure he would be noticed anywhere. Don't you think

he's very handsome, sir? He is the very copy of his poor father. I had another—perhaps you have been told. He was killed." And the poor little lady bravely smiled, for fear of doing worse. "He was a very fine boy, but very different from Roderick. Roderick is a little strange; he has never been an easy boy. Sometimes I feel like the goose—wasn't it a goose, dear?" and startled by the audacity of her comparison she appealed to Miss Garland—"the goose or the hen, who hatched a swan's egg. I have never been able to give him what he needs. I have always thought that in more—in more brilliant circumstances he might find his place and be happy. But at the same time I was afraid of the world for him; it was so dangerous and dreadful—so mixed. No doubt I know very little about it. I never suspected, I confess, that it contained persons of such liberality as yours."

Rowland replied that evidently she had done the world but scanty justice.

"No," objected Miss Garland after a pause, "it is like something in a fairy tale."

"What, pray?"

"Your coming here all unknown, so rich and so polite, and carrying off my cousin in a golden cloud."

If this was badinage Miss Garland had the best of it, for Rowland almost fell a-musing silently over the question whether there were a possibility of irony in the young lady's lucid glance. Before he withdrew Mrs. Hudson made him tell her again that Roderick's powers were extraordinary. He had inspired her with a clinging, caressing faith in his wisdom. "He will really do great things?" she asked—"the very greatest?"

"I see no intrinsic reason why he should not."

"Well, we shall think of that as we sit here alone," she rejoined. "Mary and I will sit here and talk about it. So I give him up," she went on, as he was going. "I am sure you will be the best of friends to him; but

if you should ever forget him or grow tired of him—if you should lose your interest in him and he should come to any harm or any trouble, please, sir, remember——" and she paused, with a tremulous voice.

"Remember, my dear madam?"

"That he is all I have—that he is everything—and that it would be very terrible."

"In so far as I can help him he shall succeed," was all Rowland could say. He turned to Miss Garland to bid her good-night, and she rose and put out her hand. She was very straightforward, but he could see that if she was too modest to be bold she was much too simple to be shy. "Have you no injunctions to give me?" he asked—to ask her something.

She looked at him a moment, and then, although she was not shy, she blushed. "Make him do his best," she said.

Rowland noted the soft intensity with which the words were uttered. "Do you take a great interest in him?" he demanded.

"Certainly."

"Then if he will not do his best for you he will not do it for me." She turned away with another blush and Rowland took his leave.

He walked homeward, thinking of many things. The great Northampton elms inter-arched far above in the darkness, but the moon had risen and through scattered apertures was hanging the dusky vault with silver lamps. There seemed to Rowland something intensely serious in the scene in which he had just taken part. He had laughed and talked and braved it out in self-defence; but when he reflected that he was really meddling with the simple stillness of this little New England home, and that he had ventured to disturb so much living security in the interest of a far-away fantastic hypothesis, he paused, amazed at his temerity. It was true, as Cecilia had said, that for an unofficious man it was a singular

position. There stirred in his mind an odd feeling of annoyance with Roderick for having so peremptorily taken possession of his mind. As he looked up and down the long vista, and saw the clear white houses glancing here and there in the broken moonshine, he could almost have believed that the happiest lot for any man was to make the most of life in some such tranquil spot as that. Here were kindness, comfort, safety, the warning voice of duty, the perfect absence of temptation. And as Rowland looked along the arch of silvered shadow and out into the lucid air of the American night, which seemed so doubly vast, somehow, and strange and nocturnal, he felt like declaring that here was beauty too—beauty sufficient for an artist not to starve upon it. As he stood there lost in the darkness, he presently heard a rapid tread on the other side of the road, accompanied by a loud jubilant whistle, and in a moment a figure emerged into an open gap of moonshine. He had no difficulty in recognising Hudson, who was presumably returning from a visit to Cecilia. Roderick stopped suddenly and stared up at the moon, with his face vividly illumined. He broke out into a snatch of song—

> "The splendour falls on castle walls
> And snowy summits old in story!"

And with a great musical roll of his voice he went swinging off into the darkness again as if his thoughts had lent him wings. He was dreaming of the inspiration of foreign lands—of castled crags and historic landscapes. What a pity, after all, thought Rowland, as he went his own way, that he shouldn't have a taste of it!

## IV.

It had been a very just remark of Cecilia's that Roderick would change with a change in his circumstances. Rowland had telegraphed to New York for another berth on his steamer, and from the hour the answer came Hudson's spirits rose to incalculable heights. He was radiant with good humour, and his charming gaiety seemed the pledge of a brilliant future. He had forgiven his old enemies and forgotten his old grievances—he seemed every way reconciled to a world in which he was going to count as an active force. He was inexhaustibly jocose and suggestive, and, as Cecilia said, he had suddenly become so good that it was only to be feared he was going to start not for the Old World, but for the Next! He took long walks with Rowland, who felt more and more the fascination of his brilliant disposition. Rowland returned several times to Mrs. Hudson's, and found the two ladies doing their best to be happy in their companion's happiness. Mary Garland, he thought, was succeeding better than her demeanour on his first visit had promised. He tried to have some especial talk with her, but her extreme reserve forced him to content himself with such response to his rather urgent overtures as might be extracted from a keenly attentive smile. It must be confessed, however, that if the response was vague, the satisfaction was great, and that Rowland after his second visit kept seeing a lurking reflection of this smile in the most unexpected places. It seemed strange that she should please him so well at so slender a cost; but please him she did, extraordinarily, and his pleasure had a quality altogether new to him. It made him restless and a trifle melancholy; he walked about absently, wondering and wishing. He wondered, among other things, why fate should have condemned

him to make the acquaintance of a girl whom he would make a sacrifice to know better, just as he was leaving the country for years. It seemed to him that he was turning his back on a chance of happiness—happiness of a sort of which the slenderest germ should be cultivated. He asked himself whether, feeling as he did, if he had only himself to please he should give up his journey and —wait. He had Roderick to please now, for whom disappointment would be cruel; but he said to himself that certainly had there been no Roderick in the case the ship should sail without him. He asked Hudson several questions about his cousin, but Roderick, confidential on most points, seemed to have reasons of his own for being reticent on this one. His measured answers quickened Rowland's curiosity, for the girl, with her irritating half-suggestions, had only to be a subject of guarded allusion in others to become intolerably interesting. He learned from Roderick that she was the daughter of a country minister, a far-away cousin of his mother, settled in another part of the State; that she was one of half a dozen daughters, that the family was very poor, and that she had come a couple of months before to pay his mother a long visit. "It is to be a very long one now," he said, "for it is settled that she is to remain while I am away."

The fermentation of contentment in Roderick's soul reached its climax a few days before the young men were to make their farewells. He had been sitting with his friends on Cecilia's verandah, but for half an hour past he had said nothing. Lounging back against a column muffled in creepers, and gazing idly at the stars, he kept carolling softly to himself with that indifference to ceremony for which he always found allowance, though it had nothing conciliatory but what his good looks gave it. At last, springing up—"I want to strike out hard!" he exclaimed. "I want to do something violent, to let off steam!"

"I'll tell you what to do, this lovely weather," said Cecilia. "Give a picnic. It can be as violent as you please, and it will have the merit of leading off our over-emotion into a safe channel, as well as yours."

Roderick laughed uproariously at Cecilia's very practical remedy for his sentimental need, but a couple of days later, nevertheless, the picnic was given. It was to be a family party, but Roderick, in his magnanimous geniality, insisted on inviting Mr. Striker, a decision which Rowland mentally applauded. "And we will have Mrs. Striker too," he said, "if she will come, to keep my mother in countenance; and at any rate we will have Miss Striker—the divine Petronilla!" The young lady thus denominated formed, with Mrs. Hudson, Miss Garland, and Cecilia, the feminine half of the company. Mr. Striker presented himself, sacrificing a morning's work, with a magnanimity greater even than Roderick's, and foreign support was further secured in the person of Mr. Whitefoot, the young Orthodox minister. Roderick had chosen the feasting place; he knew it well and had passed many a summer afternoon there, lying at his length on the grass and gazing at the blue undulations of the horizon. It was a meadow on the edge of a wood, with mossy rocks protruding through the grass and a little lake on the other side. It was a cloudless August day; Rowland always remembered it, and the scene, and everything that was said and done, with extraordinary distinctness. Roderick surpassed himself in friendly jollity, and at one moment, when exhilaration was at the highest, was seen in Mr. Striker's high white hat, drinking champagne from a broken tea-cup to Mr. Striker's health. Miss Striker had her father's pale blue eye; she was dressed as if she had been going to sit for her photograph, and remained for a long time with Roderick on a little promontory overhanging the lake. Mrs. Hudson sat all day with a little meek apprehensive smile. She was afraid of an "accident," though unless Miss

Striker (who indeed was a little of a romp) should push Roderick into the lake, it was hard to see what accident could occur. Mrs. Hudson was as neat and crisp and uncrumpled at the end of the festival as at the beginning. Mr. Whitefoot, who but a twelvemonth later became a convert to Episcopacy and was already cultivating a certain conversational sonority, devoted himself to Cecilia. He had a little book in his pocket, out of which he read to her at intervals, lying stretched at her feet; and it was a lasting joke with Cecilia afterwards that she would never tell what Mr. Whitefoot's little book had been. Rowland had placed himself near Miss Garland while the feasting went forward on the grass. She wore a so-called gipsy hat—a little straw hat, tied down over her ears, so as to cast her eyes into shadow, by a ribbon passing outside of it. When the company dispersed after lunch, he proposed to her to take a stroll in the wood. She hesitated a moment, and looked towards Mrs. Hudson as if for permission to leave her. But Mrs. Hudson was listening to Mr. Striker, who sat gossiping to her with relaxed consistency, his waistcoat unbuttoned and his hat on his nose.

"You can give your cousin your society at any time," said Rowland. "But me perhaps you will never see again."

"Why, then, should we wish to be friends, if nothing is to come of it?" she asked with homely logic. But by this time she had consented, and they were treading the fallen pine-needles.

"Oh, one must take all one can get," said Rowland. "If we can be friends for half an hour it's so much gained."

"Do you expect never to come back to Northampton again?"

"'Never' is a good deal to say. But I go to Europe for a long stay."

"Do you prefer it so much to your own country?"

"I will not say that. But I have the misfortune to be a rather idle man, and in Europe the burden of idleness is less heavy than here."

She was silent for a few minutes; then at last, "In that, then, we are better than Europe," she said. To a certain point Rowland agreed with her, but he demurred, to make her say more.

"Wouldn't it be better," she asked, "to work to get reconciled to America than to go to Europe to get reconciled to idleness?"

"Doubtless, but you know work is hard to find."

"I come from a little place where every one has plenty," said Mary Garland. "We all work; every one I know works. And really," she added presently, "I look at you with curiosity; you are the first unoccupied man I ever saw."

"Don't look at me too hard," said Rowland, smiling. "I shall sink into the earth. What is the name of your little place?"

"West Nazareth," said Mary Garland with her usual directness. "It is not so very little, though it's smaller than Northampton."

"I wonder whether I could find any work at West Nazareth," Rowland said.

"You would not like it," Miss Garland declared reflectively. "Though there are far finer woods there than this. We have miles and miles of woods."

"I might chop down trees," said Rowland. "That is, if you allow it."

"Allow it? Why, where should we get our fire-wood?" Then noticing that he had spoken jestingly she glanced at him askance, though with no visible diminution of her gravity. "Don't you know how to do anything? Have you no profession?"

Rowland shook his head. "Absolutely none."

"What do you do all day?"

"Nothing worth relating. That's why I am going to

Europe. There at least if I do nothing I shall see a great deal; and if I am not a producer I shall at any rate be an observer."

"Can't we observe everywhere?"

"Certainly; and I really think that in that way I make the most of my opportunities. Though I confess," he continued, "that I often remember there are things to be seen here to which I probably have not done justice. I should like, for instance, to see West Nazareth."

She looked round at him, open-eyed; not apparently that she exactly supposed he was jesting, for the expression of such a desire was not necessarily facetious; but as if he must have spoken with an ulterior motive. In fact, he had spoken from the simplest of motives. The girl beside him pleased him immensely, and suspecting that her charm was essentially her own and not reflected from social circumstance, he wished to give himself the satisfaction of contrasting her with the meagre influences of her education. Miss Garland's second movement was to take him at his word. "Since you are free to do as you please, why don't you go there?"

"I am not free to do as I please now. I have offered your cousin to bear him company to Europe, he has accepted with enthusiasm, and I can't back out."

"Are you going to Europe simply for his sake?"

Rowland hesitated for a moment. "I think I may almost say so."

Mary Garland walked along in silence. "Do you mean to do a great deal for him?" she asked at last.

"What I can. But my power of helping him is very small beside his power of helping himself."

For a moment she was silent again. "You are very generous," she said, almost solemnly.

"No, I am simply very shrewd. Roderick will repay me. It's a speculation. At first, I think," he added shortly afterwards, "you would not have paid me that little compliment. You didn't believe in me."

She made no attempt to deny it. "I didn't see why you should wish to make Roderick discontented. I thought you were rather frivolous."

"You did me injustice. I don't think I am that."

"It was because you are unlike other men—those at least whom I have seen."

"In what way?"

"Why, as you describe yourself. You have no duties, no profession, no home. You live for your pleasure."

"That's all very true. And yet I maintain I am not frivolous."

"I hope not," said Mary Garland, simply. They had reached a point where the wood-path forked and put forth two divergent tracks which lost themselves in a verdurous tangle. The young girl seemed to think that the difficulty of choice between them was a reason for giving them up and turning back. Rowland thought otherwise, and detected agreeable grounds for preference in the left-hand path. As a compromise, they sat down on a fallen log. Looking about him, Rowland espied a curious wild shrub, with a spotted crimson leaf; he went and plucked a spray of it and brought it to his companion. He had never observed it before, but she immediately called it by its name. She expressed surprise at his not knowing it; it was extremely common. He presently brought her a specimen of another delicate plant, with a little blue-streaked flower. "I suppose that's common too," he said, "but I have never seen it—or noticed it at least." She answered that this one was rare, and meditated a moment before she could remember its name. At last she recalled it, and expressed surprise at his having found the plant in the woods; she supposed it grew only in the marshes. Rowland complimented her on her fund of useful information.

"It's not especially useful," she answered; "but I like to know the names of plants as I do those of my acquaintances. When we walk in the woods at home—which

we do so much—it seems as unnatural not to know what to call the flowers as it would be to see some one in the town with whom we should not be on speaking terms."

"*Apropos* of frivolity," Rowland said, "I am sure you yourself have very little of it, unless at West Nazareth it is considered frivolous to walk in the woods and nod to the nodding flowers. Do kindly tell me a little about yourself." And to compel her to begin, "I know you come of a race of theologians," he went on.

"No," she replied, deliberating; "they are not theologians, though they are ministers. We don't take a very firm stand upon doctrine; we are practical rather. We write sermons and preach them, but we do a great deal of hard work besides."

"And of this hard work what has your share been?"

"The hardest part—doing nothing."

"What do you call nothing?"

"I taught some small children their lessons once; I must make the most of that. But I confess I didn't like it. Otherwise, I have only done little things at home, as they turned up."

"What kind of things?"

"Oh, every kind. If you had seen my home you would understand."

Rowland would have liked to make her specify; but he felt a sort of luxurious pleasure in being discreet. "To be happy, I imagine," he contented himself with saying, "you need to be occupied. You need to have something to expend yourself upon."

"That is not so true as it once was; now that I am older I am sure I am less impatient of leisure. Certainly these two months that I have been with Mrs. Hudson I have had a terrible amount of it. And yet I have liked it! And now that I am probably to be with her all the while that her son is away, I look forward to more with dreadful resignation."

"It is settled, then, that you are to remain with your cousin?"

"It depends upon their writing from home that I may stay. But that is probable. Only I must not forget," she said, rising, "that the ground for my doing so is that she shall not be left alone."

"I am glad to know that I shall probably often hear about you. I assure you I shall often think about you!" These words of Rowland's were half impulsive, half deliberate. They were the simple truth, and he had asked himself why he should not tell her the truth. And yet they were not all of it; her hearing the rest would depend upon the way she received this. She received it not only, as Rowland foresaw, without a shadow of coquetry, of any apparent thought of listening to it gracefully, but with a slight movement of nervous deprecation which seemed to betray itself in the quickening of her step. Evidently, if Rowland was to take pleasure in hearing about her, it would have to be a highly disinterested pleasure. She answered nothing, and Rowland too, as he walked beside her, was silent; but as he looked along the shadow-woven wood-path what he was really facing was a level three years of disinterestedness. He ushered them in by talking composed civility until he had brought Miss Garland back to her companions.

He saw her but once again. He was obliged to be in New York a couple of days before sailing, and it was arranged that Roderick should overtake him at the last moment. The evening before he left Northampton he went to say farewell to Mrs. Hudson. The ceremony was brief. Rowland soon perceived that the poor little lady was in the melting mood, and, as he dreaded her tears, he compressed a multitude of solemn promises into a silent hand-shake, and took his leave. Mary Garland, she had told him, was in the back garden with Roderick; he might go out to them. He did so,

and as he drew near he heard Roderick's high-pitched voice ringing behind the shrubbery. In a moment, emerging, he found the girl leaning against a tree, with her cousin before her talking with great emphasis. He asked pardon for interrupting them, and said he wished only to bid her good-bye. She gave him her hand, and he held it an instant, saying nothing. "Don't forget," he said to Roderick, as he turned away. "And don't, in this company, repent of your bargain."

"I shall not let him," said Mary Garland, with something very like gaiety. "I shall see that he is punctual. He must go! I owe you an apology for having doubted that he ought to go!" And, in spite of the dusk, Rowland could see that she had even a sweeter smile than he had supposed.

Roderick was punctual, eagerly punctual, and they went. Rowland for several days was occupied with material cares, and lost sight of his sentimental perplexities. But they only slumbered, and they were sharply awakened. The weather was fine, and the two young men always sat together upon deck late into the evening. One night, towards the last, they were at the stern of the great ship, watching her grind the solid blackness of the ocean into phosphorescent foam. They talked on these occasions of everything conceivable, and had the air of having no secrets from each other. But it was on Roderick's conscience that this air belied him, and he was too frank by nature, moreover, for permanent reticence on any point.

"I must tell you something," he said at last. "I should like you to know it, and you will be so glad to know it. Besides, it's only a question of time; three months hence probably you would have guessed it. I am engaged to Mary Garland."

Rowland sat staring; though the sea was calm it seemed to him that the ship gave a great dizzying lurch. But in a moment he contrived to answer coherently—

"Engaged to Mary Garland! I never supposed—I never imagined—"

"That I was in love with her?" Roderick interrupted. "Neither did I until this last fortnight. But you came and put me into such ridiculous good humour that I felt an extraordinary desire to tell some woman that I adored her. Mary Garland is a magnificent girl; you know her too little to do her justice. I have been quietly learning to know her these past three months, and have been falling in love with her without suspecting it. It appeared when I spoke to her that she thought me a charming fellow! So the thing was settled. I must, of course, make some money before we can marry. It's rather awkward, certainly, to engage one's self to a girl whom one is going to leave for years the next day. We shall be condemned for some time to come to do a terrible deal of abstract thinking about each other. But I wanted her blessing, and I couldn't help asking for it. Unless a man is unnaturally selfish he needs to work for some one else than himself, and I am sure I shall run a smoother and swifter course for knowing that that capital creature is waiting at Northampton for news of my greatness. If ever I am a dull companion, and over-addicted to moping, remember in justice to me that I am in love, and that my sweetheart is five thousand miles away."

Rowland listened to all this with a feeling that fortune had played him an elaborately-devised trick. It had lured him out into mid-ocean, and smoothed the sea and stilled the winds and given him a singularly-sympathetic comrade, and then it had turned and delivered him a thumping blow in mid-chest. "Yes," he said, after an attempt at the usual formal congratulation, "you certainly ought to do better—with Miss Garland waiting for you at Northampton!"

Roderick, now that he had broken ground, was eloquent, and rung a hundred changes on the assurance

that he was a very happy man. Then at last, suddenly, his climax was a yawn, and he declared that he must go to bed. Rowland let him go alone, and sat there late between sea and sky.

## V.

One warm, still day, late in the Roman autumn, our two young men were sitting beneath one of the high-stemmed pines of the Villa Ludovisi. They had been spending an hour in the mouldy little garden-house where the colossal mask of the famous Juno looks out with blank eyes from that dusky corner which must seem to her the last possible stage of a lapse from Olympus. Then they had wandered out into the gardens, and were lounging away the morning under the spell of their magical picturesqueness. Roderick declared that he would go nowhere else; that after the Juno it was a profanation to look at anything but sky and trees. There was a fresco of Guercino, to which Rowland, though he had seen it on his former visit to Rome, went dutifully to pay his respects. But Roderick, though he had never seen it, declared that it couldn't be worth a fig, and that he didn't care to look at ugly things. He remained stretched on his overcoat, which he had spread on the grass, while Rowland went off envying the intellectual comfort of genius, which can arrive at serene conclusions without disagreeable processes. When the latter came back, his friend was sitting with his elbows on his knees and his head in his hands. Rowland, in the geniality of a mood attuned to the mellow charm of a Roman villa, found a good word to say for the Guercino; but he chiefly talked of the view from the little belvedere on the roof of the casino, and how it looked like the prospect from a castle turret in a fairy tale.

"Very likely," said Roderick, throwing himself back with a yawn. "But I must let it pass. I have seen enough for the present; I have reached the top of the hill. I have an indigestion of impressions; I must work them off before I go in for any more. I don't want to look at any more of other people's works for a month—not even at Nature's own. I want to look at Roderick Hudson's! The result of it all is that I am not afraid. I can but try, as well as the rest of them! The fellow who did that gazing goddess yonder only made an experiment. The other day, when I was looking at Michael Angelo's Moses, I was seized with a kind of defiance—a reaction against all this mere passive enjoyment of grandeur. It was a rousing great success, certainly, that sat there before me, but somehow it was not an inscrutable mystery, and it seemed to me, not perhaps that I should some day do as well, but that at least I *might!*"

"As you say, you can but try," said Rowland. "Success is only passionate effort."

"Well, the passion is blazing; we have been piling on fuel handsomely. It came over me just now that it is exactly three months to a day since I left Northampton. I can't believe it!"

"It certainly seems more."

"It seems like ten years. What an exquisite ass I was!"

"Do you feel so wise now?"

"Verily! Don't I look so? Surely I haven't the same face. Haven't I a different eye, a different expression, a different voice?"

"I can hardly say, because I have watched the transformation. But it's very likely. You are, in the literal sense of the word, more civilised. I daresay," added Rowland, "that Miss Garland would think so."

"That's not what she would call it; she would say I am corrupted."

Rowland asked few questions about Mary Garland, but

he always listened narrowly to his companion's voluntary observations. "Are you very sure?" he replied.

"Why, she's a stern moralist, and she would infer from my appearance that I had become a gilded profligate." Roderick had in fact a Venetian watch-chain round his neck and a magnificent Roman intaglio on the third finger of his left hand.

"Shall you think I take a liberty," asked Rowland, "if I say you judge her superficially?"

"For heaven's sake," cried Roderick laughing, "don't tell me she's not a moralist! It was for that I fell in love with her—and with rigid virtue in her person."

"She is a moralist, but not, as you imply, a narrow one. That's more than a difference in degree; it's a difference in kind. I don't know whether I ever mentioned it, but I have a great notion of Miss Garland. There is nothing narrow about her but her experience; everything else is large. My impression of her is that she is very intelligent, but that she has never had a chance to prove it. Some day or other I am sure she will judge fairly and wisely of everything."

"Stay a bit!" cried Roderick; "you are a better Catholic than the Pope. I shall be content if she judges fairly of me—of my merits, that is. The rest she must not judge at all. She's a grimly devoted little creature; may she always remain so! Changed as I am, I adore her none the less. What becomes of all our emotions, our impressions," he went on after a long pause, "all the material of thought that life pours into us at such a rate during such a memorable three months as these? There are twenty moments a week—a day, for that matter, some days—that seem supreme, twenty impressions that seem ultimate, that appear to form an intellectual era. But others come treading on their heels and sweeping them along, and they all melt like water into water and settle the question of precedence among themselves. The curious thing is that the more the mind takes in, the

more it has space for, and that all one's ideas are like the Irish people at home who live in the different corners of a room and take boarders."

"I fancy it is our peculiar good luck that we don't see the limits of our minds," said Rowland. "We are young, compared with what we may one day be. That belongs to youth; it is perhaps the best part of it. They say that old people do find themselves at last face to face with a solid blank wall and stand thumping against it in vain. It resounds, it seems to have something beyond it, but it won't move! That's only a reason for living with open doors as long as we can!"

"Open doors?" murmured Roderick. "Yes, let us close no doors that open upon Rome. For this, for the mind, is eternal warm weather! But though my doors may stand open to-day," he presently added, "I shall see no visitors. I want to pause and breathe; I want to dream of a statue. I have been working hard for three months; I have earned a right to a reverie."

Rowland, on his side, was not without provision for reflection, and they lingered on in gentle desultory gossip. Rowland felt the need for intellectual rest, for a truce to present care for churches, statues, and pictures, on even better grounds than his companion, inasmuch as he had really been living Roderick's intellectual life the past three months as well as his own. As he looked back on these animated weeks he drew a long breath of satisfaction—almost of relief. Roderick so far had justified his confidence and flattered his perspicacity; he was giving a splendid account of himself. He was changed even more than he himself suspected; he had stepped without faltering into his birthright, and was spending money, intellectually, as lavishly as a young heir who has just won an obstructive lawsuit. Roderick's glance and voice were the same, doubtless, as when they enlivened the summer dusk on Cecilia's verandah, but in his person generally there was an indefinable expression of experience

rapidly and easily assimilated. Rowland had been struck at the outset with the instinctive quickness of his observation and his free appropriation of whatever might serve his purpose. He had not been, for instance, half an hour on English soil before he perceived that he was dressed provincially, and he had immediately reformed his toilet with the most unerring tact. His appetite for novelty was insatiable, and for everything characteristically foreign, as it presented itself, he had an extravagant greeting; but in half an hour the novelty had faded, he had guessed the secret, he had plucked out the heart of the mystery and was clamouring for a keener sensation. At the end of a month he presented a puzzling spectacle to his companion. He had caught instinctively the keynote of the Old World. He observed and enjoyed, he criticised and rhapsodised, but though all things interested him and many delighted him, none surprised him; he invented short cuts and anticipated the unexpected. Witnessing the rate at which he did intellectual execution on the general spectacle of European life, Rowland at moments felt vaguely uneasy for the future; the boy was living too fast, he would have said, and giving alarming pledges to ennui in his later years. But we must live as our pulses are timed, and Roderick's struck the hour very often. He was by imagination, though he never became in manner, a natural man of the world; he had intuitively, as an artist, what one may call the historic consciousness. He asked Rowland questions which this halting dilettante was quite unable to answer, and of which he was equally unable to conceive where he had picked up the data. Roderick ended by answering them himself, tolerably to his satisfaction, and in a short time he had almost turned the tables, and become in their walks and talks the accredited fountain of criticism. Rowland took a generous pleasure in his companion's confident *coup d'œil;* Roderick was so much younger than he himself had ever been! Surely youth and genius hand in hand were the most beautiful

sight in the world. Roderick added to this the charm of his more immediately personal qualities. The vivacity of his perceptions, the audacity of his imagination, the picturesqueness of his phrase when he was pleased—and even more when he was displeased—his abounding good-humour, his candour, his unclouded frankness, his unfailing impulse to share every emotion and impression with his friend; all this made comradeship a high felicity, and interfused with a deeper amenity the wanderings and contemplations that beguiled their pilgrimage to Rome.

They had gone almost immediately to Paris, and had spent their days at the Louvre and their evenings at the theatre. Roderick was divided in mind as to whether Titian or Mademoiselle Delaporte were the greater artist. They had come down through France to Genoa and Milan, had spent a fortnight in Venice and another in Florence, and had now been a month in Rome. Roderick had said that he meant to spend three months in simply looking, absorbing, and reflecting, without putting pencil to paper. He looked indefatigably, and certainly saw great things—things greater doubtless at times than the intention of the artist. And yet he made few false steps, and wasted little time in theories of what he ought to like and to dislike. He judged instinctively and passionately, but never vulgarly. At Venice for a couple of days he had half a fit of melancholy over the pretended discovery that he had missed his way, and that the only proper vestment of plastic conceptions was the colouring of Titian and Paul Veronese. Then one morning the two young men had themselves rowed out to Torcello, and Roderick lay back for a couple of hours watching a brown-breasted gondolier making superb muscular movements, in high relief, against the sky of the Adriatic, and at the end jerked himself up with a violence that nearly swamped the gondola, and declared that the only thing worth living for was to make a colossal bronze and set it aloft in the light of a public square. In Rome his first

care was for the Vatican; he went there again and again. But the old imperial and papal city altogether delighted him; only there he really found what he had been looking for from the first—the complete contradiction of Northampton. And indeed Rome is the natural home of those spirits with which we just now claimed fellowship for Roderick—the spirits with a deep relish for the artificial element in life and the infinite superpositions of history. It is the immemorial city of convention; and in that still recent day the most impressive convention in all history was visible to men's eyes in the reverberating streets, erect in a gilded coach drawn by four black horses. Roderick's first fortnight was a high æsthetic revel. He declared that Rome made him feel and understand more things than he could express; he was sure that life must have there for all one's senses an incomparable fineness; that more interesting things must happen to one there than anywhere else. And he gave Rowland to understand that he meant to live freely and largely and be as interested as occasion demanded. Rowland saw no reason to regard this as a menace of grossness, because in the first place there was in all dissipation, refine it as one might, a vulgarity which would disqualify it for Roderick's favour; and because in the second the young sculptor was a man to regard all things in the light of his art, to hand over his passions to his genius to be dealt with, and to find that he could live largely enough without exceeding the circle of pure delights. Rowland took immense satisfaction in his companion's lively desire to transmute all his impressions into production. Production indeed was not always working at a clay model, but the form it sometimes took was none the less a safe one. He wrote frequent long letters to Mary Garland; when Rowland went with him to post them he thought wistfully of the fortune of the large loosely-written missives, which cost Roderick unconscionable sums in postage. He received punctual answers of a more frugal shape, written in

a clear and delicate hand, on paper vexatiously thin. If Rowland was present when they came, he turned away and thought of other things, or tried to think. These were the only moments when his sympathy halted, and they were brief. For the rest he let the days go by unprotestingly, and enjoyed Roderick's serene efflorescence as he would have done a beautiful summer sunrise. Rome for the past month had been delicious. The annual descent of the Goths had not yet begun, and sunny leisure seemed to brood over the city,

Roderick had taken out a note-book, and was roughly sketching a memento of the great Juno. Suddenly there was a noise on the gravel, and the young men, looking up, saw three persons advancing. One was a woman of middle age, with a rather grand air and a great many furbelows. She looked very hard at our friends as she passed, and glanced back over her shoulder as if to hasten the step of a young girl who slowly followed her. She had such an expansive majesty of mien that Rowland supposed she must have some proprietary right in the villa and was not just then in a hospitable mood. Beside her walked a little elderly man, tightly buttoned in a shabby black coat, but with a flower in his lappet and a pair of soiled light gloves. He was a grotesque-looking personage, and might have passed for a gentleman of the old school reduced by adversity to playing cicerone to foreigners of distinction. He had a little black eye which glittered like a diamond, and rolled about like a ball of quicksilver, and a white moustache, cut short and stiff, like a worn-out brush. He was smiling with extreme urbanity, and talking in a low mellifluous voice to the lady, who evidently was not listening to him. At a considerable distance behind this couple strolled a young girl, apparently of about twenty. She was tall and slender and dressed with extreme elegance; she led by a cord a large poodle of the most fantastic aspect. He was combed and decked like a ram for sacrifice; his

trunk and haunches were of the most transparent pink, his fleecy head and shoulders as white as jeweller's cotton, his tail and ears ornamented with long blue ribbons. He stepped along stiffly and solemnly beside his mistress, with an air of conscious elegance. There was something at first slightly ridiculous in the sight of a young lady gravely appended to an animal of these incongruous attributes, and Roderick, with his customary frankness, greeted the spectacle with a confident smile. The young girl perceived it and turned her face full upon him, with a gaze intended apparently to enforce greater deference. It was not deference, however, her countenance provoked, but startled submissive admiration; Roderick's smile fell dead, and he sat eagerly staring. A pair of extraordinary dark blue eyes, a mass of dusky hair over a low forehead, a blooming oval of perfect purity, a flexible lip just touched with disdain, the step and carriage of a tired princess—these were the general features of his vision. The young lady was walking slowly and letting her long dress rustle over the gravel; the young men had time to see her distinctly before she averted her face and went away. She left a vague sweet perfume behind her as she passed.

"Immortal powers!" cried Roderick; "what a vision! In the name of transcendent perfection who is she?" He sprang up and stood looking after her until she rounded a turn in the avenue. "What a movement, what a manner, what a poise of the head! I wonder if she would sit to me?"

"You had better go and ask her," said Rowland, laughing. "She is certainly most beautiful."

"Beautiful? She's beauty itself—she's a revelation. I don't believe she is living—she's a phantasm, a vapour, an illusion!"

"The poodle," said Rowland, "is certainly alive."

"No, he too may be a grotesque phantom, like the black dog in *Faust*."

"I hope at least that the young lady has nothing in common with Mephistopheles. She looked dangerous."

"If beauty is immoral, as people think at Northampton," said Roderick, "she is the incarnation of evil. The mamma and the queer old gentleman, moreover, are a pledge of her reality. Who are they all?"

"The Prince and Princess Ludovisi and the *principessina*," suggested Rowland.

"There are no such people," said Roderick. "Besides, the little old man is not the papa." Rowland smiled, wondering how he had ascertained these facts, and the young sculptor went on. "The old man is a Roman, a hanger-on of the mamma, a useful personage who now and then gets asked to dinner. The ladies are foreigners from some Northern country; I won't say which."

"Perhaps from the State of Maine," said Rowland.

"No, she is not an American, I will lay a wager on that. She is a daughter of this elder world. We shall see her again, I pray my stars; but if we don't I shall have done something I never expected—I shall have had a glimpse of ideal beauty." He sat down again and went on with his sketch of the Juno, scrawled away for ten minutes, and then handed the result in silence to Rowland. Rowland uttered an exclamation of surprise and applause. The drawing represented the Juno as to the position of the head, the brow and the broad fillet across the hair; but the eyes, the mouth, the physiognomy were a vivid portrait of the young girl with the poodle. "I have been wanting a subject," said Roderick; "there's one made to my hand! And now for work!"

They saw no more of the young girl, though Roderick looked hopefully for some days into the carriages on the Pincian. She had evidently only been passing through Rome; Naples or Florence now happily possessed her, and she was guiding her fleecy companion through the Villa Reale or the Boboli Gardens with the same superb defiance of irony. Roderick went to work and spent a

month shut up in his studio; he had an idea, and he was not to rest till he had embodied it. He had established himself in the basement of a huge, dusky, dilapidated old house, in that long tortuous and pre-eminently Roman street which leads from the Corso to the Bridge of St. Angelo. The black archway which admitted you might have served as the portal of the Augean stables, but you emerged presently upon a mouldy little court, of which the fourth side was formed by a narrow terrace overhanging the Tiber. Here, along the parapet, were stationed half a dozen shapeless fragments of sculpture, with a couple of meagre orange-trees in terra-cotta tubs and an oleander that never flowered. The unclean historic river swept beneath; behind were dusky, reeking walls, spotted here and there with hanging rags and flower-pots in windows; opposite, at a distance, were the bare brown banks of the stream, the huge rotunda of St. Angelo, tipped with its seraphic statue, the dome of St. Peter's and the broad-topped pines of the Villa Pamfili. The place was crumbling and shabby and melancholy, but the river was delightful, the rent was a trifle, and everything was picturesque. Roderick was in the best humour with his quarters from the first, and was certain that the faculty of production would be intenser there in an hour than in twenty years at Northampton. His studio was a large empty room with a vaulted ceiling, covered with vague dark traces of an old fresco which Rowland when he spent an hour with his friend used to stare at vainly for some surviving coherence of floating draperies and clasping arms. Roderick had lodged himself economically in the same quarter. He occupied a fifth floor on the Ripetta, but he was only at home to sleep, for when he was not at work he was either lounging in Rowland's more luxurious rooms or strolling through streets and churches and gardens.

Rowland had found a convenient corner in a stately old palace close to the Fountain of Trevi, and made

himself a home to which books and pictures and prints and odds and ends of curious furniture gave an air of leisurely permanence. He had the tastes of a collector; he spent half his afternoons ransacking the dusky magazines of the curiosity-mongers, and he often made his way in quest of a prize into the heart of impecunious Roman households which had been prevailed upon to listen—with closed doors and an impenetrably wary smile—to proposals for an hereditary "antique." In the evening often, under the lamp, amid dropped curtains and the scattered gleam of firelight upon polished carvings and mellow paintings, the two friends sat with their heads together, criticising intaglios and etchings, water-colour drawings and illuminated missals. Roderick's quick appreciation of every form of artistic beauty reminded his companion of the flexible temperament of those Italian artists of the sixteenth century who were indifferently painters and sculptors, sonneteers and engravers. At times when he saw how the young sculptor's day passed in a single sustained pulsation, while his own was broken into a dozen conscious devices for disposing of the hours, and intermingled with sighs, half suppressed, some of them, for conscience' sake, over what he failed of in action and missed in possession—he felt a pang of something akin to envy. But Rowland had two substantial aids for giving patience the air of contentment; he was an inquisitive reader and a passionate rider. He plunged into bulky German octavos on Italian history, and he spent long afternoons in the saddle, ranging over the grassy desolation of the Campagna. As the season went on and the social groups began to constitute themselves, he found that he knew a great many people, and that he had easy opportunity for knowing others. He enjoyed a quiet corner of a drawing-room beside an agreeable woman, and although the machinery of what calls itself society seemed to him to have many superfluous wheels, he accepted invitations

and made visits punctiliously, from the conviction that the only way not to be overcome by the ridiculous side of most of such observances is to take them with exaggerated gravity. He introduced Roderick right and left, and suffered him to make his way himself—an enterprise for which Roderick very soon displayed an all-sufficient capacity. Wherever he went he made, not exactly what is called a favourable impression, but what, from a practical point of view, is better—a puzzling one. He took to evening parties as a duck to water, and before the winter was half over was the most freely and frequently discussed young man in the heterogeneous foreign colony. Rowland's theory of his own duty was to let him run his course and play his cards, only holding himself ready to point out shoals and pitfalls and administer a friendly propulsion through tight places. Roderick's manners on the precincts of the Pincian were quite the same as his manners on Cecilia's verandah; that is, they were no manners at all. But it remained as true as before that it would have been impossible, on the whole, to violate ceremony with less of lasting offence. He interrupted, he contradicted, he spoke to people he had never seen, and left his social creditors without the smallest conversational interest on their loans; he lounged and yawned, he talked loud when he should have talked low, and low when he should have talked loud. Many people in consequence thought him insufferably conceited, and declared that he ought to wait till he had something to show for his powers before he assumed the airs of a spoiled celebrity. But to Rowland and to most friendly observers this judgment was quite beside the mark, and the young man's undiluted naturalness was its own justification. He was impulsive, spontaneous, sincere; there were so many people at dinner-tables and in studios who were not that it seemed worth while to allow this rare specimen all possible freedom of action. If Roderick took the words out of your mouth when you were just pre-

pared to deliver them with the most effective accent, he did it with a perfect good conscience, and with no pretension of a better right to being heard, but simply because he was full to overflowing of his own momentary thought, and it sprang from his lips without asking leave. There were persons who waited on your periods much more deferentially, that were a hundred times more capable than Roderick of a reflective impertinence. Roderick received from various sources, chiefly feminine, enough finely-adjusted advice to have established him in life as an embodiment of the proprieties, and he received it, as he afterwards listened to criticisms on his statues, with unfaltering candour and good-humour. Here and there doubtless as he went he took in a reef in his sail; but he was too adventurous a spirit to be successfully tamed, and he remained at most points the florid, rather strident young Virginian whose brilliant aridity had been the despair of Mr. Striker. All this was what friendly commentators (still chiefly feminine) alluded to when they spoke of his delightful freshness, and critics of harsher sensibilities (of the other sex) when they denounced his damned impertinence. His appearance enforced these impressions—his handsome face, his radiant unaverted eyes, his childish unmodulated voice. Afterwards, when those who loved him were in tears, there was something in all this unspotted comeliness that seemed to lend a mockery to the causes of their sorrow.

Certainly, among the young men of genius who for so many ages have gone up to Rome to test their powers, none ever made a fairer beginning than Roderick. He rode his two horses at once with extraordinary good fortune; he established the happiest *modus vivendi* betwixt work and play. He wrestled all day with a mountain of clay in his studio, and chattered half the night away in Roman drawing-rooms. It all seemed part of a kind of divine facility. He was passionately interested, he was feeling his powers; now that they had thoroughly

kindled in the glowing æsthetic atmosphere of Rome the ardent young fellow should be pardoned for believing that he never was to see the end of them. He enjoyed immeasurably, after the chronic obstruction of home, the downright act of production. He kept models in his studio till they dropped with fatigue; he drew on other days at the Capitol and the Vatican till his own head swam with his eagerness and his limbs stiffened with the cold. He had promptly set up a life-sized figure which he called an "Adam," and was pushing it rapidly towards completion. There were naturally a great many wiseheads who smiled at his precipitancy and cited him as one more example of Yankee crudity—a capital recruit to the great army of those who wish to dance before they can walk. They were right, but Roderick was right too, for the success of his statue was not to have been foreseen; it partook really of the miraculous. He never surpassed it afterwards, and a good judge here and there has been known to pronounce it the finest piece of sculpture of our modern time. To Rowland it seemed to justify superbly the highest hopes of his friend, and he said to himself that if he had staked his reputation on bringing out a young lion he ought now to pass for a famous connoisseur. In his elation he travelled up to Carrara, and selected at the quarries the most magnificent block of marble he could find, and when it came down to Rome the two young men had a "celebration." They drove out to Albano, breakfasted boisterously (in their respective measure) at the inn, and lounged away the day in the sun on the top of Monte Cavo. Roderick's head was full of ideas for other works, which he described with infinite spirit and eloquence, as vividly as if they were ranged on their pedestals before him. He had an indefatigable fancy; things he saw in the streets, in the country, things he heard and read, effects he saw just missed or half expressed in the works of others, acted upon his mind as a kind of challenge, and he was terribly

uneasy until in some form or other he had taken up the glove and set his lance in rest.

The Adam was put into marble, and all the world came to see it. Of the criticisms passed upon it this history undertakes to offer no record; over many of them the two young men had a daily laugh for a month, and certain of the formulas of the connoisseurs, restrictive or indulgent, furnished Roderick with a permanent supply of humorous catchwords. But people enough spoke flattering good sense to make Roderick feel as if he were already half famous. The statue passed formally into Rowland's possession; it was paid for as if an illustrious name had been chiselled on the pedestal. Poor Roderick owed every franc of the money. It was not for this, however, but because he was so gloriously in the mood, that, denying himself all breathing time, on the same day he had given the last touch to the Adam, he began to shape the rough contour of an Eve. This experiment went forward with equal rapidity and success. Roderick lost his temper time and again with his models, who offered but a gross degenerate image of his splendid ideal; but his ideal, as he assured Rowland, became gradually such a fixed vivid presence that he had only to shut his eyes to behold a creature far more to his purpose than the poor girl who stood posturing at forty sous an hour. The Eve was finished in three months, and the feat was extraordinary, as well as the statue, which represented an admirably beautiful woman. When the spring began to muffle the rugged old city with its tremulous festoons it seemed to him that he had done a handsome winter's work and had fairly earned a holiday. He took a liberal one, and lounged away the lovely Roman May, doing nothing. He looked very contented; with himself perhaps at times a trifle too obviously. But who could have said without good reason? He was "flushed with triumph;" this classic phrase portrayed him to Rowland's sense. He would lose himself in long re-

veries, and emerge from them with a quickened smile and heightened colour. Rowland grudged him none of his smiles, and took an extreme satisfaction in his two statues. He had these productions transported to his own apartment, and one warm evening in May he gave a little dinner in honour of the artist. It was small, but Rowland had meant it should be very agreeably composed. He thought over his friends, and chose four. They were all persons with whom he lived in a certain intimacy.

## VI.

One of them was an American sculptor of French extraction, or remotely perhaps of Italian, for he rejoiced in the somewhat fervid name of Gloriani. He was a man of forty, he had been living for years in Paris and in Rome, and he now drove a very pretty trade in sculpture of the ornamental and fantastic sort. In his youth he had had money; but he had spent it recklessly, much of it scandalously, and at twenty-six had found himself obliged to make capital of his talent. This was quite inimitable, and fifteen years of indefatigable exercise had brought it to perfection. Rowland admitted its power, though it gave him very little pleasure; what he relished in the man was the extraordinary vivacity and frankness, not to call it the impudence, of his opinions. He had a definite, practical scheme of art, and he knew at least what he meant. In this sense he was solid and complete. There were so many of the æsthetic fraternity who were floundering in unknown seas, without a notion of which way their noses were turned, that Gloriani, conscious and compact, unlimitedly intelligent and consummately clever, dogmatic only as to his own duties, and at once gracefully deferential and profoundly indif-

ferent to those of others, had for Rowland a certain intellectual refreshment quite independent of the character of his works. These were considered by most people to belong to a very corrupt, and by many to a positively indecent, school. Others thought them tremendously knowing, and paid enormous prices for them; and indeed to be able to point to one of Gloriani's figures in a shady corner of your library was tolerable proof that you were not a fool. Corrupt things they certainly were; in the line of sculpture they were quite the latest fruit of time. It was the artist's opinion that there is no essential difference between beauty and ugliness; that they overlap and intermingle in a quite inextricable manner; that there is no saying where one begins and the other ends; that hideousness grimaces at you suddenly from out of the very bosom of loveliness, and beauty blooms before your eyes in the lap of vileness; that it is a waste of wit to nurse metaphysical distinctions, and a sadly meagre entertainment to caress imaginary lines; that the thing to aim at is the expressive, and the way to reach it is by ingenuity; that for this purpose everything may serve, and that a consummate work is a sort of hotch-potch of the pure and the impure, the graceful and the grotesque. Its prime duty is to amuse, to puzzle, to fascinate, to savour of a complex imagination. Gloriani's statues were florid and meretricious; they looked like magnified goldsmith's work. They were extremely elegant, but they had no charm for Rowland. He never bought one, but Gloriani was such an independent fellow, and was withal só deluged with orders, that this made no difference in their friendship. The artist might have passed for a Frenchman. He was a great talker, and a very picturesque one; he was almost bald; he had a small bright eye, a broken nose, and a moustache with waxed ends. When sometimes he received you at his lodging, he introduced you to a lady with a plain face whom he called Madame Gloriani—which she was not.

Rowland's second guest was also an artist, but of a very different type. His friends called him Sam Singleton; he was an American, and he had been in Rome a couple of years. He painted small landscapes, chiefly in water-colours; Rowland had seen one of them in a shop window, had liked it extremely, and ascertaining his address, had gone to see him and found him established in a very humble studio near the Piazza Barberini, where apparently fame and fortune had not yet found him out. Rowland took a fancy to him and bought several of his pictures; Singleton made few speeches, but he was grateful. Rowland heard afterwards that when he first came to Rome he painted worthless daubs and gave no promise of talent. Improvement had come, however, hand in hand with patient industry, and his talent, though of a slender and delicate order, was now incontestable. It was as yet but scantily recognised, and he had hard work to live. Rowland hung his little water-colours on the library wall, and found that as he lived with them he grew very fond of them. Singleton was a diminutive attenuated personage; he looked like a precocious child. He had a high protuberant forehead, a transparent brown eye, a perpetual smile, an extraordinary expression of modesty and patience. He listened much more willingly than he talked, with a little fixed grateful grin; he blushed when he spoke, and always offered his ideas in a sidelong fashion, as if the presumption were against them. His modesty set them off, and they were eminently to the point. He was so perfect an example of the little noiseless laborious artist whom chance, in the person of a moneyed patron, has never taken by the hand, that Rowland would have liked to befriend him by stealth. Singleton had expressed a fervent admiration for Roderick's productions, but he had not yet met the young master. Roderick was lounging against the chimney-piece when he came in, and Rowland presently introduced him. The little water-colourist stood with folded

hands, blushing, smiling and looking up at him as if Roderick had been himself a statue on a pedestal. Singleton began to murmur something about his pleasure, his admiration; the desire to say something very appreciative gave him almost a look of distress. Roderick looked down at him, surprised, and suddenly burst into a laugh. Singleton paused a moment, and then, with an intenser smile, went on—"Well, sir, your statues are beautiful, all the same!"

Rowland's two other guests were ladies, and one of them, Miss Blanchard, belonged also to the artistic fraternity. She was an American, she was young, she was pretty, and she had made her way to Rome alone and unaided. She lived alone, or with no other duenna than a bushy-browed old serving-woman, though indeed she had a friendly neighbour in the person of a certain Madame Grandoni, who in various social emergencies lent her a protecting wing, and had come with her to Rowland's dinner. Miss Blanchard had a small fortune, but she was not above selling her pictures. These represented generally a bunch of dew-sprinkled roses, with the dew-drops very highly finished, or else a wayside shrine and a peasant woman with her back turned kneeling before it. She did backs very well, but she was a little weak in faces. Flowers, however, were her speciality, and though her touch was a little old-fashioned and finical, she painted them with remarkable skill. Her pictures were chiefly bought by the English. Rowland had made her acquaintance early in the winter, and as she kept a saddle horse and rode a great deal he had asked permission to be her cavalier. In this way they had become almost intimate. Miss Blanchard's name was Augusta; she was slender, pale, and elegant; she had a very pretty head and brilliant auburn hair, which she braided with classic simplicity. She talked in a sweet soft voice, used language at times a trifle superfine, and made literary allusions. These had often a patriotic

strain, and Rowland had more than once been treated to quotations from Mrs. Sigourney in the cork-woods of Monte Mario, and from Mr. Willis among the ruins of Veii. Rowland was of a dozen different minds about her, and was half surprised at times to find himself treating it as a matter of serious moment that he should like her or not. He admired her, and indeed there was something admirable in her combination of beauty and talent, of isolation and self-support. He used sometimes to go into the little high-niched ordinary room which served her as a studio, and find her working at a panel six inches square, at an open casement, profiled against the deep blue Roman sky. She received him with a meek-eyed dignity that made her seem like a painted saint on a church window receiving the daylight in all her being. The breath of vulgar rumour passed her by with folded wings. And yet Rowland wondered why he did not like her better. If he failed, the reason was not far to seek. There was another woman whom he liked better, an image in his heart which gave itself little airs of exclusiveness.

On that evening to which allusion has been made, when Rowland was left alone between the starlight and the waves with the sudden knowledge that Mary Garland was to become another man's wife, he had made after a while the simple resolution to forget her. And every day since, like a famous philosopher who wished to abbreviate his mourning for a faithful servant, he had said to himself in substance—"Remember to forget Mary Garland." Sometimes it seemed as if he were succeeding; then, suddenly, when he was least expecting it, he would find her name inaudibly on his lips, and seem to see her eyes meeting his eyes. All this made him uncomfortable, and seemed to portend a possible discord. Discord was not to his taste; he shrank from imperious passions, and the idea of finding himself jealous of an unsuspecting friend was simply disgusting. More than ever, then,

the path of good manners was to forget Mary Garland, and he cultivated oblivion, as we may say, in the person of Miss Blanchard. Her fine temper, he said to himself, was a trifle cold and conscious, her purity prudish perhaps, her culture pedantic. But since he was obliged to give up hopes of Mary Garland, Providence owed him a compensation, and he had fits of angry sadness in which it seemed to him that to attest his right to sentimental satisfaction he should indulge in some defiantly incongruous passion. And what was the use, after all, of bothering about a possible which was only perhaps a dream? Even if Mary Garland had been free, what right had he to assume that he should have pleased her? The actual was good enough. Miss Blanchard had beautiful hair, and if she were a trifle old-maidish, there was nothing like matrimony for curing old-maidishness.

Madame Grandoni, who had formed with the companion of Rowland's rides an alliance which might have been called defensive on the part of the former and attractive on that of Miss Blanchard, was an excessively ugly old lady, highly esteemed in Roman society for her homely benevolence and her shrewd and humorous good sense. She had been the widow of a German archæologist who came to Rome in the early ages as an *attaché* of the Prussian legation on the Capitoline. Her good sense had been wanting on but a single occasion, that of her second marriage. This occasion was certainly a momentous one, but these are by common consent not test cases. A couple of years after her first husband's death she had accepted the hand and the name of a Neapolitan music-master, ten years younger than herself, and with no fortune but his fiddle-bow. The marriage was most unhappy, and the Maestro Grandoni was suspected of using the fiddle-bow as an instrument of conjugal correction. He had finally run off with a *prima donna assoluta*, who, it was to be hoped, had given him a taste of the quality implied in her title. He was believed to be living

still, but he had shrunk to a small black spot in Madame Grandoni's life, and for ten years she had not mentioned his name. She wore a light flaxen wig, which was never very artfully adjusted; but this mattered little, as she made no secret of it. She used to say, "I was not always so ugly as this; as a young girl I had beautiful golden hair, very much the colour of my wig." She had worn from time immemorial an old blue satin dress and a white crape shawl embroidered in colours; her appearance was ridiculous, but she had an interminable Teutonic pedigree, and her manners in every presence were easy and jovial, as became a lady whose ancestor had been cup-bearer to Frederick Barbarossa. Thirty years' observation of Roman society had sharpened her wits and given her an inexhaustible store of anecdotes; but she had beneath her crumpled bodice a deep-welling fund of Teutonic sentiment, which she communicated only to the objects of her particular favour. Rowland had a great regard for her, and she repaid it by wishing him to get married. She never saw him without whispering to him that Augusta Blanchard was just the girl.

It seemed to Rowland a sort of foreshadowing of matrimony to see Augusta Blanchard standing gracefully on his hearth-rug, and blooming behind the central bouquet at his circular dinner-table. The dinner was very prosperous, and Roderick amply filled his position as hero of the feast. He had always an air of joyous intentness, but on this occasion he manifested a good deal of harmless pleasure in his glory. He drank freely and talked bravely; he leaned back in his chair with his hands in his pockets, and flung open the gates of his eloquence. Singleton sat gazing and listening open-mouthed, as if Phœbus Apollo had been talking. Gloriani showed a twinkle in his eye, and an evident disposition to draw Roderick out. Rowland was rather regretful, for he knew that theory was not his friend's strong point, and that it was never fair to take his measure from his language.

"As you have begun with Adam and Eve," said Gloriani, "I suppose you are going straight through the Bible." He was one of the persons who thought Roderick delightfully fresh.

"I may make a David," said Roderick, "but I shall not try any more of the Old Testament people. I don't like the Jews; I don't like pendulous noses. David, the boy David, is rather an exception; you can think of him and treat him as a young Greek. Standing forth there on the plain of battle between the contending armies, rushing forward to let fly his stone, he looks like a beautiful runner at the Olympic games. After that I shall skip to the New Testament. I mean to make a Christ."

"You will put nothing of the Olympic games into him, I hope," said Gloriani.

"Oh, I shall make him very different from the Christ of tradition; more—more——" and Roderick paused a moment to think. This was the first that Rowland had heard of his Christ.

"More rationalistic, I suppose," suggested Miss Blanchard.

"More idealistic!" cried Roderick. "The perfection of form, you know, to symbolise the perfection of spirit."

"For a companion-piece," said Miss Blanchard, "you ought to make a Judas."

"Never! I mean never to make anything ugly. The Greeks never made anything ugly, and I am a Hellenist; I am not a Hebraist! I have been thinking lately of making a Cain, but I should never dream of making him ugly. He should be a very handsome fellow, and he should lift up the murderous club with the beautiful movement of the fighters in the Greek friezes who are chopping at their enemies."

"There is no use trying to be a Greek," said Gloriani. "If Phidias were to come back he would recommend

you to give it up. I am half Italian and half French, and, as a whole, a Yankee. What sort of a Greek should I make? I think the Judas is a capital idea for a statue. Much obliged to you, madam, for the suggestion. What an insidious little scoundrel one might make of him, sitting there nursing his money-bag and his treachery! There may be a great deal of expression in a pendulous nose, my dear sir—especially if one has put it there!"

"Very likely," said Roderick. "But it is not the sort of expression I care for. I care only for perfect beauty. There it is, if you want to know it! That is as good a profession of faith as another. In future, so far as my things are not positively beautiful, you may set them down as failures. For me, it's either that or nothing. It is against the taste of the day, I know; we have really lost the faculty to understand beauty in the large ideal way. We stand like a race with shrunken muscles, staring helplessly at the weights our forefathers easily lifted. But I don't hesitate to proclaim it—I mean to lift them again! I mean to go in for big things; that is my notion of my art. I mean to do things that will be simple, and vast, and infinite. You shall see if they won't be infinite! Excuse me if I brag a little; all those Italian fellows in the Renaissance used to brag. There was a sensation once common, I am sure, in the human breast—a kind of religious awe in the presence of a marble image newly created, and expressing the human type in superhuman purity. When Phidias and Praxiteles had their statues of goddesses unveiled in the temples of the Ægean, don't you suppose there was a passionate beating of hearts, a thrill of mysterious terror? I mean to bring it back; I mean to thrill the world again! I mean to produce a Juno that will make you tremble, a Venus that will make you grow faint."

"So that when we come and see you," said Madame Grandoni, "we must be sure and bring our smelling-bottles. And pray, have a few sofas conveniently placed."

"Phidias and Praxiteles," Miss Blanchard remarked, "had the advantage of believing in their goddesses. I insist on believing, for myself, that the pagan mythology is not a fiction, and that Venus, and Juno, and Apollo, and Mercury used to come down in a cloud into this very city of Rome, where we sit talking nineteenth-century English."

"Nineteenth-century nonsense, my dear!" cried Madame Grandoni. "Mr. Hudson may be a new Phidias, but Venus and Juno—that's you and I—arrived to-day in a very dirty cab; and were cheated by the driver too."

"But, my dear fellow," objected Gloriani, "you don't mean to say you are going to make over in cold blood those poor old exploded Apollos and Hebes."

"It won't matter what you call them," said Roderick. "They shall be simply divine forms. They shall be Beauty; they shall be Wisdom; they shall be Power; they shall be Genius; they shall be Daring. That's all the Greek divinities were."

"That's rather abstract, you know," said Miss Blanchard.

"My dear fellow," cried Gloriani, "you are delightfully young!"

"I hope you will not grow any older," said Singleton, with a flush of sympathy across his large white forehead. "You can do it if you try."

"Then there are all the Forces, and Elements, and Mysteries of Nature," Roderick went on. "I mean to do the Morning; I mean to do the Night! I mean to do the Ocean and the Mountains; the Moon and the West Wind. I mean to make a magnificent statue of America!"

"America—the Mountains—the Moon!" said Gloriani. "You will find it rather hard, I'm afraid, to compress such subjects into classic forms."

"Oh, there's a way," cried Roderick, "and I shall

think it out. My figures shall make no contortions, but they shall mean a tremendous deal."

"I am sure there are contortions enough in Michael Angelo," said Madame Grandoni; "perhaps you don't approve of him."

"Oh, Michael Angelo was not me!" said Roderick with sublimity. There was a great laugh; but, after all, Roderick had done some fine things.

Rowland had bidden one of the servants to bring him a small portfolio of prints, and had taken out a photograph of Roderick's little statue of the youth drinking. It pleased him to see his friend sitting there in radiant ardour, defending idealism against so knowing an apostle of corruption as Gloriani, and he wished to help the elder artist to be confuted. He silently handed him the photograph.

"Bless me!" cried Gloriani, "did he do this?"

"Ages ago," said Roderick.

Gloriani looked at the photograph a long time, with evident admiration.

"It's deucedly pretty," he said at last. "But, my dear young friend, you can't keep this up."

"I shall do better," said Roderick.

"You will do worse! You will become weak. You will have to take to violence, to contortions, to romanticism, in self-defence. This sort of thing is like a man trying to lift himself up by the seat of his trousers. He may stand on tiptoe, but he can't do more. Here you stand on tiptoe, very gracefully, I admit; but you can't fly; there's no use trying."

"My 'America' shall answer you!" said Roderick, shaking towards him a tall glass of champagne and drinking it down.

Singleton had taken the photograph, and was poring over it with a little murmur of delight.

"Was this done in America?" he asked.

"In a square white wooden house at Northampton, Massachusetts," Roderick answered.

"Dear old white wooden houses!" said Miss Blanchard.

"If you could do as well as this there," said Singleton, blushing and smiling, "one might say that really you had only to lose by coming to Rome."

"Our host is to blame for that," said Roderick. "But I am willing to risk the loss."

The photograph had been passed to Madame Grandoni. "It reminds me," she said, "of the things a young man used to do whom I knew years ago, when I first came to Rome. He was a German, a pupil of Overbeck, and a votary of spiritual art. He used to wear a black velvet tunic and a very low shirt collar; he had a neck like a sickly crane, and he let his hair grow down to his shoulders. His name was Herr Schaafgans. He never painted anything so profane as a man taking a drink, for none of his people had anything so vulgar as an appetite. They were all angles and edges—they looked like diagrams of human nature. They were figures if you please—but geometrical figures. He would not have agreed with Gloriani any more than you. He used to come and see me very often, and in those days I thought his tunic and his long neck infallible symptoms of genius. His talk was all of gilded aureoles and beatific visions; he lived on weak wine and biscuits, and wore a lock of Saint Somebody's hair in a little bag round his neck. If he was not a Beato Angelico it was not his own fault. I hope with all my heart that Mr. Hudson will do the fine things he talks about, but he must bear in mind the history of dear Mr. Schaafgans as a warning against high-flown pretensions. One fine day this poor young man fell in love with a Roman model, though she had never sat to him, I believe, for she was a buxom, bold-faced, high-coloured creature, and he painted none but pale and sickly women. He offered to marry her, and she looked at him from head to foot, gave a shrug, and consented. But he was ashamed to set up his *ménage* in Rome.

They went to Naples, and there, a couple of years afterwards, I saw him. The poor fellow was ruined. His wife used to beat him, and he had taken to drinking. He wore a ragged black coat, and he had a blotchy red face. Madame had turned washerwoman, and used to make him go and fetch the dirty linen. His talent had gone heaven knows where! He was getting his living by painting views of Vesuvius in eruption on the little boxes they sell at Sorrento."

"Moral: don't fall in love with a buxom Roman model," said Roderick. "I am much obliged to you for your story, but I don't mean to fall in love with any one."

Gloriani had possessed himself of the photograph again, and was looking at it curiously. "It's a happy bit of youth," he said. "But you can't keep it up—you can't keep it up!"

The two sculptors pursued their discussion after dinner in the drawing-room. Rowland left them to have it out in a corner, where Roderick's Eve stood over them in the shaded lamplight, in vague white beauty, like the guardian angel of the young idealist. Singleton was listening to Madame Grandoni, and Rowland took his place on the sofa near Miss Blanchard. They had a good deal of familiar desultory talk; every now and then Madame Grandoni looked round at them. Miss Blanchard at last asked Rowland certain questions about Roderick—who he was, where he came from, whether it was true, as she had heard, that Rowland had discovered him and brought him out at his own expense. Rowland answered her questions; to the last he gave a vague affirmative. Finally, after a pause, looking at him, "You are very generous," Miss Blanchard said. The declaration was made with a certain richness of tone, but it brought to Rowland's sense neither delight nor confusion. He had heard the words before; he suddenly remembered the grave sincerity with which Mary Garland

had uttered them as he strolled with her in the woods on the day of Roderick's picnic. They had pleased him then; now he asked Miss Blanchard whether she would have some tea.

When the two ladies withdrew he went with them to their hackney coach. Coming back to the drawing-room, he paused outside the open door; he was struck by the group formed by the three men. They were standing before Roderick's statue of Eve, and the young sculptor had lifted up the lamp and was showing different parts of it to his companions. He was talking ardently—the lamplight covered his head and face. Rowland stood looking on, for the group struck him with its picturesque symbolism. Roderick, bearing the lamp and glowing in its radiant circle, seemed the beautiful image of a genius which combined sincerity with power. Gloriani, with his head on one side, pulling his long moustache and looking keenly from half-closed eyes at the lighted marble, represented art with a worldly motive, skill unleavened by faith, the mere base maximum of cleverness. Poor little Singleton, on the other side, with his hands behind him, his head thrown back and his eyes following devoutly the course of Roderick's explanations, might pass for an embodiment of aspiring candour afflicted with feebleness of wing. In all this, Roderick's was certainly the *beau rôle*.

Gloriani turned to Rowland as he came up, and pointed back with his thumb to the statue, with a smile half sardonic, half good-natured. "A pretty thing—a devilish pretty thing," he said. "It's as fresh as the foam in the milk-pail. He can do it once, he can do it twice, he can do it at a stretch half a dozen times. But—*but*——"

He was returning to his former refrain, but Rowland intercepted him. "Oh, he will keep it up," he said, smiling, "I will answer for him!"

Gloriani was not encouraging, but Roderick had listened smiling. He was floating on the tide of his deep

self-confidence. Now, suddenly, however, he turned with a flash of irritation in his eye, and demanded in a ringing voice, "In a word, then, you prophesy that I shall fail?"

Gloriani answered imperturbably, patting him kindly on the shoulder. "My dear fellow, passion burns out, inspiration runs to seed. Some fine day every artist finds himself sitting face to face with his lump of clay, with his empty canvas, with his sheet of blank paper, waiting in vain for the revelation to be made, for the Muse to descend. He must learn to do without the Muse! When the fickle jade forgets the way to your studio, don't waste any time in tearing your hair and meditating on suicide. Come round and see me, and I will show you how to console yourself."

"If I break down," said Roderick passionately, "I shall stay down. If the Muse deserts me, she shall at least have her infidelity on her conscience!"

"You have no business," Rowland said to Gloriani, "to talk lightly of the Muse in this company. Mr. Singleton too has received pledges from her which place her constancy beyond suspicion." And he pointed out on the wall, near by, two small landscapes by the modest water-colourist.

The sculptor examined them with deference, and Singleton himself began to laugh nervously; he was trembling with hope that the great Gloriani would be pleased. "Yes, these are fresh too," Gloriani said; "extraordinarily fresh! How old are you?"

"Twenty-six, sir," said Singleton.

"For twenty-six they are famously fresh. They must have taken you a long time; you work slowly."

"Yes, unfortunately I work very slowly. One of them took me six weeks, the other two months."

"Upon my word! The Muse pays you long visits." And Gloriani turned and looked from head to foot at so unlikely an object of her favours. Singleton smiled and

began to wipe his forehead very hard. "Oh, you," said the sculptor—"you'll keep it up!"

A week after his dinner party Rowland went into Roderick's studio and found him sitting before an unfinished piece of work, with a hanging head and a heavy eye. He might have fancied that the fatal hour foretold by Gloriani had struck. Roderick rose with a sombre yawn and flung down his tools. "It's no use," he said, "I give it up!"

"What is it?"

"I have struck a shallow! I have been sailing bravely, but for the last day or two my keel has been grinding the bottom."

"A difficult place?" Rowland asked, with a sympathetic inflection, looking vaguely at the roughly-modelled figure.

"Oh, it's not the poor old clay!" Roderick answered. "The difficult place is *here!*" And he struck a blow on his heart. "I don't know what's the matter with me. Nothing comes; all of a sudden I hate things. My old things look ugly; everything looks stupid."

Rowland was perplexed. He was in the situation of a man who has been riding a blood-horse at a steady elastic gallop, and of a sudden feels him stumble and balk. As yet, he reflected, he had seen nothing but the sunshine of genius; he had forgotten that it has its storms. Of course it has! And he felt a flood of comradeship rise in his heart which would float them both safely through the worst weather. "Why, you are tired!" he said. "Of course you are tired. You have a right to be."

"Do you think I have a right to be?" Roderick asked, looking at him.

"Unquestionably, after all you have done."

"Well, then, right or wrong, I am tired. I certainly have done a fair winter's work. I want a change."

Rowland declared that it was certainly high time they

should be leaving Rome. They would go north and travel. They would go to Switzerland, to Germany, to Holland, to England. Roderick assented, his eye brightened, and Rowland talked of a dozen things they might do. Roderick walked up and down; he seemed to have something to say which he hesitated to bring out. He hesitated so rarely that Rowland wondered, and at last asked him what was on his mind. Roderick stopped before him, frowning a little.

"I have such unbounded faith in your good-will," he said, "that I believe nothing I can say would offend you."

"Try it!" said Rowland.

"Well, then, I think my journey will do me more good if I take it alone. I needn't say I prefer your society to that of any man living. For the last six months it has been a fund of comfort. But I have a perpetual feeling that you are expecting something of me, that you are measuring my doings by a terrifically high standard. You are watching me; I don't want to be watched! I want to go my own way; to work when I choose, and to loaf when I choose. It is not that I don't know what I owe you: it is not that we are not friends. It is simply that I want a taste of perfect freedom. Therefore I say let us separate."

Rowland shook him by the hand. "Willingly—do as you desire! I shall miss you, and I venture to believe you will pass some lonely hours. But I have only one request to make—that if you get into trouble of any kind whatever, you will immediately let me know."

They began their journey, however, together, crossing the Alps side by side, muffled in one rug, on the top of the St. Gothard coach. Rowland was going to England to pay some promised visits; his companion had no plan save to ramble through Switzerland and Germany as fancy should guide him. He had money that would outlast the summer; when it was spent he would come back to Rome and make another statue. At a little moun-

tain village by the way Roderick declared that he would stop; he would scramble about a little in the high places and doze in the shade of the pine forests. The coach was changing horses; the two young men walked along the village street, picking their way between dunghills, breathing the light cool air, and listening to the plash of the fountain and the tinkle of cattle bells. The coach overtook them, and then Rowland, as he prepared to mount, felt an almost overmastering reluctance.

"Say the word," he exclaimed, "and I will stop too!"

Roderick frowned. "Ah, you don't trust me; you don't think I am able to take care of myself! That proves that I was right in feeling as if I were watched!"

"Watched, my dear fellow?" said Rowland, "I hope you may never have anything worse to complain of than being watched in the spirit in which I watch you. But I will spare you even that. Good-bye!" Standing in his place as the coach rolled away, he looked back at his friend lingering by the roadside. A great snow mountain behind Roderick was beginning to turn pink in the sunset. The slim and straight young figure waved its hat with a sort of mocking solemnity. Rowland settled himself in his place, reflecting, after all, that this was a salubrious beginning of independence. Roderick was among forests and glaciers, leaning on the pure bosom of nature. And then—and then—was it not in itself a guarantee against folly to be engaged to Mary Garland?

## VII.

ROWLAND passed the summer in England, staying with several old friends and two or three new ones. On his arrival he felt it on his conscience to write to Mrs. Hudson and inform her that her son had relieved him of his

tutelage. He felt that she thought of him as an incorruptible Mentor, following Roderick like a shadow, and he wished to let her know the truth. But he made the truth very comfortable, and gave a detailed account of the young man's brilliant beginnings. He owed it to himself, he said, to remind her that he had not judged lightly, and that Roderick's present achievements were more profitable than his inglorious drudgery at Messrs. Striker and Spooner's. He was now taking a well-earned holiday and proposing to see a little of the world. He would work none the worse for this; every artist needed to knock about and look at things for himself. They had parted company for a couple of months, for Roderick was now a great man and beyond the need of going about with a keeper. But they were to meet again in Rome in the autumn, and then he should be able to send her more good news. Meanwhile he was very happy in what Roderick had already done—especially happy in the happiness it must have brought his mother. He ventured to ask to be kindly commended to Miss Garland.

His letter was promptly answered—to his surprise in the hand of the latter lady. The same post brought also an epistle from Cecilia. The document was voluminous, and we must content ourselves with giving an extract.

"Your letter was filled with an echo of that brilliant Roman world which made me almost ill with envy. For a week after I got it I thought Northampton really unpardonably tame. But I am drifting back again to my old deeps of resignation, and I rush to the window, when any one passes, with all my old gratitude for small favours. So Roderick Hudson is already a great man, and you turn out to be a great prophet? My compliments to both of you; I never saw a trick so prettily played! And he takes it all very quietly, and doesn't lose his balance nor let it turn his head? You judged him, then, in a day better than I had done in six months, for I really did not expect that he would behave so properly.

I believed he would do fine things, but I was sure he would intersperse them with a good many follies, and that his beautiful statues would spring up out of the midst of a dense plantation of wild oats. But from what you tell me, Mr. Striker may now go hang himself. . . . There is one thing, however, to say as a friend, in the way of warning. That candid soul can keep a secret, and he may have private designs on your peace of mind. What do you think of his being engaged to Mary Garland? The two ladies had given no hint of it all winter, but a fortnight ago, when those big photographs of his statues arrived, they first pinned them up on the wall, and then trotted out into the town and made a dozen calls, announcing the news. Mrs. Hudson did, at least; Miss Mary, I suppose, sat at home writing letters. To me, I confess, the thing was a brutal surprise. I had not a suspicion that all the while he was coming so regularly to make himself agreeable on my verandah, he was quietly preferring his cousin to any one else. Not, indeed, that he was ever at particular pains to make himself agreeable! I suppose he has picked up a few graces in Rome. But he must not pick up too many; if he is too polite when he comes back, Miss G. will count him as one of the lost. She will be a very good wife for a man of genius, and such a one as they are often shrewd enough to take. She will darn his stockings and keep his accounts, and sit at home and trim the lamp and keep up the fire, while he studies the Beautiful in pretty neighbours at dinner-parties. The two ladies are evidently very happy, and, to do them justice, very humbly grateful to you. Mrs. Hudson never speaks of you without tears in her eyes, and I am sure she regards you as our leading philanthropist. Verily, it's a good thing for a woman to be in love; Mary Garland has grown almost pretty. I met her the other night at a tea-party; she had a white rose in her hair, and sang a sentimental ballad in a fine contralto voice."

Mary Garland's letter was so much shorter that we may give it entire :—

"MY DEAR SIR—Mrs. Hudson, as I suppose you know, has been for some time unable to use her eyes. She requests me, therefore, to answer your beautiful letter of the 22d of June. She thanks you extremely for writing, and wishes me to say that she considers herself under great obligations to you. Your account of her son's progress, and the high esteem in which he is held, has made her very happy, and she earnestly prays that all may go on well. He sent us a short time ago several large photographs of his two statues, taken from different points of view. We know little about such things, but they seem to us wonderfully beautiful. We sent them to Boston to be handsomely framed, and the man, on returning them, wrote us that he had exhibited them for a week in his gallery, and that they had attracted great attention. The frames are magnificent, and the pictures now hang in a row on the parlour wall. Our only quarrel with them is that they make the old papering and the engravings look dreadfully shabby. Mr. Striker stood and looked at them the other day full five minutes, and said at last that if Roderick's head had been running on such things it was no wonder he could not learn to draw up a deed. We lead here so quiet and monotonous a life that I am afraid I can tell you nothing that will interest you. Mrs. Hudson requests me to say that the little that might happen to us—more or less—is of small importance, as we live in our thoughts, which are fixed on her dear son. She thanks Heaven he has so good a friend. Mrs. Hudson says that this is too short a letter, but I can say nothing more.

"Yours most respectfully,

"MARY GARLAND."

It is a question whether the reader will know why,

but this letter gave Rowland extraordinary pleasure. He liked its shortness and meagreness, and there seemed to him an exquisite modesty in its saying nothing from the young girl herself. He delighted in the formal address and conclusion; they pleased him as he had been pleased by an angular gesture in some expressive girlish figure in an early painting. The letter renewed that impression of fine feeling combined with an almost rigid simplicity which Roderick's betrothed had personally given him. And its homely stiffness seemed a vivid reflection of a life concentrated, as the young girl had borrowed warrant from her companion to say, in a single devoted idea. The monotonous days of the two women seemed to Rowland's fancy to follow each other like the tick-tick of a great timepiece, marking off the hours which separated them from the supreme felicity of clasping the far-away son and lover to lips sealed with the intensity of joy.

He was left to vain conjectures, however, as to Roderick's own state of mind. He knew he was no letter writer, and that, in the young sculptor's own phrase, he would at any time rather build a monument than write a note. But when a month had passed without news of him, he began to be half anxious and half angry, and wrote him three lines, in the care of a Continental banker, begging him at least to give some sign of life. A week afterwards came an answer—brief, and dated Baden-Baden. "I know I have been a great brute," Roderick wrote, "not to have sent you a word before; but really I don't know what has got into me. I have lately learned terribly well how to do nothing. I am afraid to think how long it is since I wrote to my mother or to Mary. Heaven help them—poor patient trustful creatures! I don't know how to tell you what I am doing or not doing. It seems all amusing enough while it lasts, but it would make a poor show in a narrative intended for your formidable eyes. I found Baxter in Switzerland, or

rather he found me, and he grabbed me by the arm and brought me here. I was walking twenty miles a day in the Alps, drinking milk in lonely châlets, sleeping as you sleep, and thinking it was all very good fun; but Baxter told me it would never do, that the Alps were 'damned rot,' that Baden-Baden was the place, and that if I knew what was good for me I would come along with him. It is a wonderful place certainly, though, thank the Lord, Baxter departed last week, blaspheming horribly at *trente et quarante*. But you know all about it, and what one does—what one is liable to do. I have succumbed, in a measure, to the liabilities, and I wish I had some one here to give me a kicking. Not you—you would kick me with your boots off; you are too devilish generous. I have fits of horrible homesickness for my studio, and I shall be devoutly grateful when the summer is over and I can go back and potter about there. I feel as if nothing but the chisel would satisfy me; as if I could rush in a rage at a block of unshaped marble, like Michael A. There are a lot of Roman people here, English and American; I live in the midst of them, and talk nonsense from morning till night. There is also some one else; and to her I don't talk sense, nor, thank Heaven, mean what I say. I confess I need a month's work to recover my self-respect."

These lines brought Rowland a large perturbation; the more that what they seemed to point to surprised him. During the nine months of their companionship Roderick had shown so little taste for disorderly doings that Rowland had come to think of these things as a cancelled danger, and it greatly perplexed him to learn that his friend had apparently proved so pliant to opportunity. But Roderick's allusions were ambiguous, and it was possible they might simply mean that he was out of patience with a frivolous way of life, and fretting wholesomely over his absent work. It was a very good thing certainly that idleness should prove on experiment

to sit heavily on his conscience. Nevertheless the letter needed to Rowland's mind a key: the key arrived a week later. "In common charity," Roderick wrote, "lend me a hundred pounds! I have gambled away my last franc—I have made a villainous heap of debts. Send me the money first; lecture me afterwards!" Rowland sent the money by return of post; then he proceeded, not to lecture, but to think. He hung his head—he was acutely disappointed. He had no right to be, he assured himself; but so it was. Roderick was young, impulsive, unpractised in stoicism; it was a hundred to one that he was to pay the usual vulgar tribute to folly. But his friend had regarded it as securely gained to his own belief in virtue that he was not as other foolish youths are, and that he would have been capable of looking at folly in the face and passing on his way. Rowland for a while felt a sore sense of wrath. What right had a man who was engaged to that delightful girl in Northampton to behave as if his consciousness were a common blank, to be overlaid with coarse sensations? Yes, distinctly, he was disappointed. He had accompanied his missive with an urgent recommendation to leave Baden-Baden immediately, and an offer to meet Roderick at any point he would name. The answer came promptly; it ran as follows: "Send me another fifty pounds! I have been back to the tables. I will leave as soon as the money comes, and meet you at Geneva. There I will tell you everything."

There is an ancient terrace at Geneva, planted with trees and studded with benches, overlooked by stately houses and overlooking the distant Alps. A great many generations have made it a lounging-place, a great many friends and lovers strolled there, a great many confidential talks and momentous interviews gone forward. Here, one morning, sitting on one of the battered green benches, Roderick, as he had promised, told his friend everything. He had arrived late the night before; he

looked tired, and yet flushed and excited. He made no professions of penitence, but he practised an unmitigated frankness, and his remorse might be taken for granted. He implied in every phrase that he had done with licentious experiments, and that he was counting the hours till he should get back to work. We shall not rehearse his confession in detail; its main outline will be sufficient. He had fallen in with some very idle people, and had discovered the charms of emulation. What could he do? He never read books, and he had no studio; in one way or another he had to pass the time. He passed it in dangling about several very pretty women, and reflecting that it was always something gained for a sculptor to sit under a tree looking at his leisure into a charming face, and saying things that made it smile and play its muscles and part its lips and show its teeth. Attached to these ladies were certain gentlemen who walked about in clouds of fragrance, rose at midday, and supped at midnight. Roderick had found himself in the mood for thinking them very amusing fellows. He was surprised at his own taste, but he let it take its course. It led him to the discovery that to live with ladies who expect you to present them with expensive bouquets, to ride with them in the Black Forest on well-looking horses, to arrange parties for the opera on nights when Patti sang and the prices were consequent, to propose light suppers at the Kursaal or drives by moonlight to the Castle, to be always arrayed and anointed, trinketed and gloved—that to move in such society, we say, though it might be a privilege, was a privilege with a penalty attached. But the tables made such things easy; half the Baden world lived by the tables. Roderick tried them, and found them at first a wonderful help. The help, however, was only momentary, for he soon perceived that to seem to have money, and to have it in fact, exposed a good-looking young man to peculiar liabilities. At this point of his friend's narrative

Rowland was reminded of Madame de Cruchecassée in Thackeray's novel, and though he had listened in tranquil silence to the rest of it, he found it hard not to say that all this had been under the circumstances a very bad business. Roderick admitted it with bitterness, and then told how much—measured simply financially—it had cost him. His luck had changed; the tables had ceased to back him, and he had found himself up to his knees in debt. Every penny had gone of the solid sum which had seemed a large equivalent of those shining statues in Rome. He had been an ass, but it was not irreparable; he could make another statue in a couple of months.

Rowland frowned. "For Heaven's sake," he said, "don't play such dangerous games with your facility. If you have got facility, revere it, respect it, adore it, hoard it—don't speculate on it." And he wondered what his companion, up to his knees in debt, would have done if there had been no good-natured Rowland Mallet to lend a helping hand. But he did not express his curiosity audibly, and the contingency seemed not to have presented itself to Roderick's imagination. The young sculptor reverted to his late adventures again in the evening, and this time talked of them more objectively, as the phrase is; more as if they had been the adventures of another person. He related half a dozen droll things that had happened to him, and, as if his responsibility had been disengaged by all this free discussion, he laughed extravagantly at the memory of them. Rowland sat perfectly grave, on principle. Then Roderick began to talk of half a dozen statues that he had in his head, and set forth his ideas with his usual vividness. Suddenly, as it was relevant, he declared that his Baden doings had not been altogether fruitless, for the lady who had reminded Rowland of Madame de Cruchecassée was tremendously statuesque. Rowland at last said that such experiments might pass if one felt one was really

the wiser for them. "By the wiser," he added, "I mean the stronger in purpose, in will."

"Oh, don't talk about will!" Roderick answered, throwing back his head and looking at the stars. This conversation also took place in the open air, on the little island in the shooting Rhone, where Jean-Jacques has a monument. "The will, I believe, is the mystery of mysteries. Who can answer for his will? who can say beforehand that it's strong? There are all kinds of indefinable currents moving to and fro between one's will and one's inclinations. People talk as if the two things were essentially distinct; on different sides of one's organism, like the heart and the liver. Mine, I know, are much nearer together. It all depends upon circumstances. I believe there is a certain group of circumstances possible for every man, in which his will is destined to snap like a dry twig."

"My dear boy," said Rowland, "don't talk about the will being 'destined.' The will is destiny itself. That's the way to look at it."

"Look at it, my dear Rowland," Roderick answered, "as you find most comfortable. One conviction I have gathered from my summer's experience," he went on—"it's as well to look it frankly in the face—is that I possess an almost unlimited susceptibility to the influence of a beautiful woman."

Rowland stared, then strolled away, softly whistling to himself. He was unwilling to admit even to himself that this speech had really the ominous meaning it seemed to have. In a few days the two young men made their way back to Italy, and lingered a while in Florence before going on to Rome. In Florence Roderick seemed to have won back his old innocence and his preference for the pleasures of study. Rowland began to think of the Baden episode as a bad dream, or at the worst as a mere sporadic escapade, without roots in his companion's character. They passed a fortnight looking at pictures and

exploring for out-of-the-way fragments of fresco and carving, and Roderick recovered all his earlier energy of appreciation and criticism. In Rome he went eagerly to work again, and finished in a month two or three small things he had left standing on his departure. He talked the most joyous nonsense about finding himself back in his old quarters. On the first Sunday afternoon following their return, on their going together to Saint Peter's, he delivered himself of a lyrical greeting to the great church and to the city in general, in a tone of voice so irrepressibly elevated that it rang through the nave in an almost scandalous fashion, and arrested a procession of canons who were marching across to the choir. He began to model a new statue—a female figure of which he had said nothing to Rowland. It represented a woman leaning lazily back in her chair, with her head drooping as if she were listening, a vague smile on her lips, and a pair of remarkably beautiful arms folded in her lap. With rather less softness of contour it would have resembled the noble statue of Agrippina in the Capitol. Rowland looked at it, and was not sure he liked it. "Who is it? what does it mean?" he asked.

"Anything you please!" said Roderick, with a certain petulance. "I call it 'A Lady Listening.'"

Rowland then remembered that one of the Baden listeners had been "statuesque," and asked no more questions. This, after all, was a way of profiting by experience. A few days later he took his first ride of the season on the Campagna, and as on his homeward way he was passing across the long shadow of a ruined tower, he perceived a small figure at a short distance bent over a sketch-book. As he drew near he recognised his friend Singleton. The honest little painter's face was scorched to flame-colour by the light of southern suns, and borrowed an even deeper crimson from his gleeful greeting of his most appreciative patron. He was making a careful and charming little sketch. On Rowland's asking him how

he had spent his summer he gave an account of his wanderings which made our poor friend sigh with a sense of more contrasts than one. He had not been out of Italy, but he had been delving deep into the picturesque heart of the lovely land, and gathering a wonderful store of subjects. He had rambled about among the unvisited villages of the Apennines, pencil in hand and knapsack on back, sleeping on straw and eating black bread and beans, but feasting on local colour, rioting on chiaroscuro, and laying up a treasure of reminiscences. He took a devout satisfaction in his hard-earned knowledge and his happy frugality. Rowland went the next day by appointment to look at his sketches, and spent a whole morning turning them over. Singleton talked more than he had ever done before, explained them all, and told some comical anecdote about the production of each.

"Dear me, how I have chattered!" he said at last. "I am afraid you would rather have looked at the things in peace and quiet. I didn't know I could talk so much. But somehow I feel very happy; I feel as if I had improved."

"That you have," said Rowland. "I doubt whether an artist ever got more out of three months. You must feel much more sure of yourself."

Singleton looked for a long time with great intentness at a knot in the floor. "Yes," he said at last in a fluttered tone, "I feel much more sure of myself. I have got more facility!" And he lowered his voice as if he were communicating a secret which it took some courage to impart. "I hardly like to say it, for fear I should, after all, be mistaken. But since it strikes you, perhaps it's true. It's a great happiness; I would not exchange it for a great deal of money."

"Yes, I suppose it's a great happiness," said Rowland. "I shall really think of you as living here in a state of scandalous bliss. I don't believe it's good for an artist to be in such brutally high spirits."

Singleton stared for a moment, as if he thought Rowland was in earnest; then suddenly fathoming the kindly jest, he walked about the room agitating his head and laughing intensely to himself. "And Mr. Hudson?" he said, as Rowland was going; "I hope he is well and happy."

"He is very well," said Rowland. "He is back at work again."

"Ah, there's a man," cried Singleton, "who has taken his start once for all and doesn't need to stop and ask himself in fear and trembling every month or two whether he is going on. When he stops it's to rest! And where did he spend his summer?"

"The greater part of it at Baden-Baden."

"Ah, that's in the Black Forest," cried Singleton, with profound simplicity. "They say you can make capital studies of trees there."

"No doubt," said Rowland, with a smile, laying an almost paternal hand on the little artist's stooping shoulder. "Unhappily, trees are not Roderick's line. Nevertheless he tells me that at Baden he made some studies. Come when you can, by the way," he added after a moment, "to his studio, and tell me what you think of something he has lately begun." Singleton declared that he would come delightedly, and Rowland left him at his work.

He met a number of his last winter's friends, and found that Madame Grandoni, Miss Blanchard, and Gloriani had again taken up the golden thread of Roman life. The ladies gave an excellent account of themselves. Madame Grandoni had been taking sea-baths at Rimini, and Miss Blanchard painting wild flowers in the Tyrol. Her complexion was somewhat browned, which was very becoming, and her flowers were uncommonly pretty. Gloriani had been in Paris, and had come away in high good-humour, finding no one there in the artist-world cleverer than himself. He came in a few days to Roderick's

studio, one afternoon when Rowland was present. He examined the new statue with great deference, said it was very promising, and abstained considerately from irritating prophecies. But Rowland fancied he observed certain signs of inward jubilation on the clever sculptor's part, and walked away with him to learn his private opinion.

"Certainly; I liked it as well as I said," Gloriani declared in answer to Rowland's anxious query; "or rather I liked it a great deal better. I didn't say how much, for fear of making your friend angry. But one can leave him alone now, for he's coming round. I told you he couldn't keep up the transcendental style, and he has already broken down. Don't you see it yourself, man?"

"I don't particularly like this new statue," said Rowland.

"That's because you are a purist. It's deuced clever, it's deuced knowing, it's deuced pretty, but it isn't the topping high art of three months ago. He has taken his turn sooner than I supposed. What has happened to him? Has he been disappointed in love? But that's none of my business. I congratulate him on having become a practical man."

Roderick, however, was less to be congratulated than Gloriani had taken it into his head to believe. He was discontented with his work, he applied himself to it by fits and starts, he declared that he didn't know what was coming over him; he was turning into a man of moods. "Is this of necessity what a fellow must come to?" he asked of Rowland, with a sort of peremptory flash in his eye, which seemed to imply that his companion had undertaken to insure him against perplexities and was not fulfilling his contract—"this damnable uncertainty when one goes to bed at night as to whether one is going to wake up in an ecstasy or in a tantrum? Have we only a season, over before we know it, in which

we can call our faculties our own? Six months ago I could stand up to my work like a man, day after day, and never dream of asking myself how I felt. But now, some mornings, it's the very devil to get going. My statue looks so bad when I come into the studio that I have twenty minds to smash it on the spot, and I lose three or four hours in sitting there moping and getting used to it."

Rowland said that he supposed that this sort of thing was the lot of every artist, and that the only remedy was plenty of courage and faith. And he reminded him of Gloriani's having forewarned him against these sterile moods the year before.

"Gloriani's an ass!" said Roderick, almost fiercely. He hired a horse, and began to ride with Rowland on the Campagna. This delightful amusement restored him in a measure to cheerfulness, but it seemed to Rowland, on the whole, not to stimulate his industry. Their rides were always very long, and Roderick insisted on making them longer by dismounting in picturesque spots and stretching himself in the sun among a heap of over-tangled stones. He let the scorching Roman luminary beat down upon him with a bravery which Rowland found it hard to emulate. But in this situation Roderick talked so much amusing nonsense that, for the sake of his company, Rowland consented to be uncomfortable, and often forgot that, though in these diversions the days passed quickly, they brought forth neither high art nor low. And yet it was perhaps by their help, after all, that Roderick secured several mornings of ardent work on his new figure and brought it to rapid completion. One afternoon when it was finished Rowland went to look at it, and Roderick asked him for his opinion.

"What do you think yourself?" Rowland demanded —not from pusillanimity but from real uncertainty.

"I think it is curiously bad," Roderick answered. "It was bad from the first; it has fundamental vices.

I have shuffled them out of sight in a sort of way, but I have not corrected them. I can't—I can't—I can't!" he cried passionately. "They stare me in the face—they are all I see!"

Rowland offered several criticisms of detail, and suggested certain practicable changes. But Roderick differed with him on each of these points; the thing had faults enough, but they were not those faults. Rowland, unruffled, concluded by saying that whatever its faults might be, he had an idea people in general would like it.

"I wish to heaven some person in particular would buy it, and take it off my hands and out of my sight!" Roderick cried. "What am I to do now?" he went on. "I haven't an idea. I think of subjects, but they remain mere lifeless names. They are mere words—they are not images. What am I to do?"

Rowland was a trifle annoyed. "Be a man," he was on the point of saying, "and don't, for Heaven's sake, talk in that confoundedly querulous voice!" But before he had uttered the words there rang through the studio a loud peremptory ring at the outer door.

Roderick broke into a laugh. "Talk of the devil and you see his horns! If that's not a customer, it ought to be."

## VIII.

THE door of the studio was promptly flung open, and a lady advanced to the threshold—an imposing voluminous person who quite filled up the doorway. Rowland immediately felt that he had seen her before, but he recognised her only when she moved forward and disclosed an attendant in the person of a little bright-eyed elderly gentleman with a bristling white moustache. Then he remembered that just a year before he and his companion

had seen in the Ludovisi gardens a wonderfully beautiful girl strolling in the train of this conspicuous couple. He looked for her now, and in a moment she appeared, following her companions with the same maidenly majesty as before, and leading her great snow-white poodle, who was decorated as before with motley ribbons. The elder lady offered the two young men a sufficiently gracious salute; the little old gentleman bowed and smiled with extreme alertness. The young girl, without casting a glance either at Roderick or at Rowland, looked about for a chair, and, on perceiving one, sank into it listlessly, pulled her poodle towards her, and began to re-arrange his top-knot. Rowland saw that, even with her eyes dropped, her beauty was still dazzling.

"I trust we are at liberty to enter," said the elder lady, with urbanity. "We were told that Mr. Hudson had no fixed day, and that we might come at any time. Let us not disturb you."

Roderick, as one of the newer lights of the Roman art-world, had not hitherto been subject to incursions from inquisitive tourists, and, having no regular reception day, was not versed in the usual arts of hospitality. He said nothing, and Rowland, looking at him, saw that he was gazing amazedly at the young girl, and was apparently unconscious of everything else. "By Jove!" he cried, precipitately, "it's that goddess of the Villa Ludovisi!" Rowland, in some confusion, did the honours as he could, but the little old gentleman begged him with the most obsequious of smiles to give himself no trouble. "I have been in many a studio!" he said, with his finger in the air, and a strong Italian accent.

"We are going about everywhere," said his companion. "I am passionately fond of art!"

Rowland smiled sympathetically, and let them turn to Roderick's statue. He glanced again at the young sculptor, to invite him to bestir himself, but Roderick was still staring wide-eyed at the beautiful young mistress

of the poodle, who by this time had looked up and was gazing straight at him. There was nothing bold in her look; it expressed a kind of languid imperturbable indifference. Her beauty was extraordinary; it grew and grew as the young man observed her. In such a face the maidenly custom of averted eyes and ready blushes would have seemed an anomaly; nature had produced it for man's delight, and meant that it should surrender itself freely and coldly to admiration. It was not immediately apparent, however, that the young lady found an answering entertainment in the physiognomy of her host; she turned her head after a moment and looked idly round the room, and at last let her eyes rest on the statue of the woman seated. It being left to Rowland to stimulate conversation, he began by complimenting her on the beauty of her dog.

"Yes, he is very handsome," she murmured. "He is a Florentine. The dogs in Florence are handsomer than the people," and on Rowland's caressing him—"His name is Stenterello," she added. "Stenterello, give your hand to the gentleman." This order was given in Italian. "Say *buon giorno a Lei.*"

Stenterello thrust out his paw and gave four short shrill barks; upon which the elder lady turned round and raised her forefinger.

"My dear, my dear, remember where you are! Excuse my foolish child," she added, turning to Roderick with an agreeable smile. "She can think of nothing but her poodle."

"I am teaching him to talk for me," the young girl went on, without heeding her mother; "to say little things in society. It will save me a great deal of trouble. Stenterello, love, give a pretty smile and say *tanti complimenti!*" The poodle wagged his white pate—it looked like one of those little pads in swan's-down for applying powder to the face—and repeated the barking process.

"He is a wonderful beast," said Rowland.

"He is not a beast," said the young girl. "A beast is something black and dirty—something you can't touch."

"He is a very valuable dog," the elder lady explained. "He was presented to my daughter by a Florentine nobleman."

"It is not for that I care about him. It is for himself. He is better than the Duke!"

"My precious love!" exclaimed the mother in deprecating accents, but with a significant glance at Rowland which seemed to bespeak his attention to the glory of possessing a daughter who could deal in that light fashion with the aristocracy.

Rowland remembered that when their unknown visitors had passed before them, a year previous, in the Villa Ludovisi, Roderick and he had exchanged conjectures as to their nationality and social quality. Roderick had declared that they were old-world people; but Rowland now needed no telling to feel that he might claim the elder lady as a fellow-countrywoman. She was a person of what is called a great deal of presence, with the faded traces, artfully revived here and there, of once brilliant beauty. Her daughter had come lawfully by her loveliness, but Rowland mentally made the distinction that the mother was silly, and the daughter was not. The mother had a fatuous countenance — a countenance, Rowland suspected, capable of expressing an inordinate degree of fatuity. The young girl, in spite of her childish satisfaction in her poodle, was not a person of a weak understanding. Rowland received an impression that for reasons of her own she was playing a part. What was the part and what were her reasons? She was interesting; Rowland wondered what were her domestic secrets. If her mother were a daughter of the great Republic it was to be supposed that the young girl was a flower of the American soil; but her beauty had a large firmness that is uncommon in the somewhat relaxed

robustness of our western maidenhood. She spoke with a vague foreign accent, as if she had spent her life in strange countries. The little Italian apparently divined Rowland's mute imaginings, for he presently stepped forward, with a bow like a master of ceremonies. "I have not done my duty," he said, "in not announcing these ladies. Mrs. Light, Miss Light!"

Rowland was not materially the wiser for this information, but Roderick was aroused by it to the exercise of some slight civility. He altered the light, pulled forward two or three figures, and made an apology for not having more to show. "I don't pretend to have anything of an exhibition—I am only a novice."

"Indeed?—a novice! For a novice this is very well," Mrs. Light declared. "Cavaliere, we have seen nothing better than this."

The Cavaliere smiled rapturously. "It is stupendous!" he murmured. "And we have been to all the studios."

"Not to all—Heaven forbid!" cried Mrs. Light. "But to a number that I have had pointed out by artistic friends. I delight in studios—I should have been so happy myself to be a little quiet artist! And if you are a novice, Mr. Hudson," she went on, "you have already great admirers. Half a dozen people have told us that yours were quite among the things to see." This gracious speech went unanswered; Roderick had already wandered across to the other side of the studio and was revolving about Miss Light. "Ah, he's gone to look at my beautiful daughter; he is not the first that has had his head turned," Mrs. Light resumed, lowering her voice to a confidential undertone; a favour which, considering the shortness of their acquaintance, Rowland was bound to appreciate. "The artists are all crazy about her. When she goes into a studio she is fatal to the pictures. And when she goes into the ball-room what do the other women say? Eh, Cavaliere?"

"She is very beautiful," Rowland said, simply.

Mrs. Light, who through her long gold-cased glasses was looking a little at everything and at nothing as if she saw it, interrupted her random murmurs and exclamations, and surveyed Rowland from head to foot. She looked at him all over; apparently he had not been mentioned to her as a feature of Roderick's establishment. It was the gaze, Rowland felt, which the vigilant and ambitious mother of a beautiful daughter has always at her command for well-appointed young men. Her inspection in this case seemed satisfactory. "Are you also an artist?" she inquired with an almost affectionate inflection. It was clear that what she meant was something of this kind: "Be so good as to assure me without delay that you are really the amiable young man of fortune that you appear."

But Rowland answered simply the formal question—not the latent one. "Dear me, no; I am only a friend of Mr. Hudson."

Mrs. Light, with a sigh, returned to the statues, and after mistaking the Adam for a gladiator and the Eve for a gipsy, declared that she could not judge of such things unless she saw them in the marble. Rowland hesitated a moment, and then, speaking in the interest of Roderick's renown, said that he was the happy possessor of several of his friend's works, and that she was welcome to come and see them at his rooms. She bade the Cavaliere make a note of his address. "Ah, you are a patron of the arts," she said. "That's what I should like to be if I had a little money. I revel in beauty in every form. But all these people ask such monstrous prices. One must be a millionaire to think of such things, eh? Twenty years ago my husband had my portrait painted, here in Rome, by Papucci, who was the great man in those days. I was in a ball-dress, with all my jewels, and my shoulders and arms—which were not a *petite affaire*. The man got six hundred francs, and thought he

was very well treated. Those were the days when a family could live like princes in Italy for five thousand scudi a year. The Cavaliere once upon a time was a great dandy—don't blush, Cavaliere; any one can see that, just as any one can see what I was! Get him to tell you what he made a figure upon. The railroads have brought in the vulgarians. That's what I call it now—the invasion of the vulgarians! What are poor *we* to do?"

Rowland had begun to murmur some remedial proposition when he was interrupted hy the voice of Miss Light calling across the room, "Mamma!"

"My own love?"

"This gentleman wishes to model my bust. Please speak to him."

The Cavaliere gave a little chuckle. "Already?" he cried.

Rowland looked round, equally surprised at the promptitude of the proposal. Roderick stood planted before the young girl with his arms folded, looking at her as he would have done at the Medicean Venus. He never paid compliments, and Rowland, though he had not heard him speak, could imagine the startling distinctness with which he made his request.

"He saw me a year ago," the young girl went on, "and he has been thinking of me ever since." Her tone in speaking was peculiar; it had a kind of studied inexpressiveness which was yet not the vulgar device of a drawl.

"I *must* make your daughter's bust—that's all, madam!" cried Roderick, with warmth.

"I would rather you should make the poodle's," said the young girl. "Is it very tiresome? I have spent half my life sitting for my photograph, in every conceivable attitude and with every conceivable coiffure. I think I have posed enough."

"My dear child," said Mrs. Light, "it may be one's

duty to pose! But as to my daughter's sitting to you, sir—to a young artist whom we don't know—it is a matter that one must look at a little. It is not a favour that's to be had for the mere asking."

"If I don't make her from life," said Roderick, with energy, "I will make her from memory, and if the thing's to be done you had better have it done as well as possible."

"Mamma hesitates," said Miss Light, "because she doesn't know whether you mean she shall pay you for the bust. I can assure you that she will not pay you a sou."

"My daughter, you forget yourself," said Mrs. Light, with an attempt at a high tone. "Of course," she added in a moment, with a change of note, "the bust would be my own property."

"Of course!" cried Roderick, impatiently.

"Dearest mother," interposed the young girl, "how can you carry a marble bust about the world with you? Is it not enough to drag the poor original?"

"My dear, you are nonsensical!" cried Mrs. Light, almost angrily.

"You can always sell it," said the young girl, with the same artful artlessness.

Mrs. Light turned to Rowland, who pitied her, flushed and irritated. "She is very wicked to-day!"

The Cavaliere grinned in silence, and walked away on tiptoe, with his hat to his lips, as if to leave the field clear for action. Rowland, on the contrary, wished to mediate. "You had better not refuse," he said to Miss Light, "until you have seen Mr. Hudson's things in the marble. Your mother is to come and look at some that I possess."

"Thank you; I have no doubt you will see us. I daresay Mr. Hudson is very clever; but I don't care for modern sculpture. I can't look at it!"

"You shall care for my bust, I promise you!" cried Roderick, with a laugh.

"To satisfy Miss Light," said the Cavaliere, "one of the old Greeks ought to come to life."

"It would be worth his while," said Roderick, paying, to Rowland's knowledge, his first compliment.

"I might sit to Phidias, if he would promise to be very amusing and make me laugh. What do you say, Stenterello? would *you* sit to Phidias?"

"We must talk of this some other time," said Mrs. Light. "We are in Rome for the winter. Many thanks. Cavaliere, call the carriage." The Cavaliere led the way out, backing like a silver-stick, and Miss Light, following her mother, nodded without looking at them, to each of the young men.

"Immortal powers, what a head!" cried Roderick, when they were gone. "There's my fortune!"

"She is certainly very beautiful," said Rowland. "But I am sorry you have undertaken her bust."

"And why, pray?"

"I suspect it will bring trouble with it."

"What kind of trouble?"

"I hardly know. They are queer people. The mamma, I suspect, is a bit of an adventuress. Heaven knows what the daughter is."

"She's a goddess!" cried Roderick.

"Just so. She is all the more dangerous."

"Dangerous? What will she do to me? She doesn't bite, I imagine."

"It remains to be seen. There are two kinds of women—you ought to know by this time—the safe and the unsafe. Miss Light, if I am not mistaken, is one of the unsafe. A word to the wise!"

"Much obliged!" said Roderick, and he began to whistle a triumphant air, in honour apparently of the advent of his beautiful model.

In calling this young lady and her mamma queer people Rowland but roughly expressed his sentiment. They were so marked a variation from the monotonous

troop of his compatriots that he felt much curiosity as to the sources of the change, especially since he doubted greatly whether on the whole it elevated the type. For a week he saw the two ladies driving daily in a well-appointed landau, with the Cavaliere and the poodle in the front seat. From Mrs. Light he received a gracious salute, tempered by her native majesty; but the young girl, looking straight before her, seemed profoundly indifferent to observers. Her extraordinary beauty, however, had already made observers numerous, and given the *habitués* of the Pincian plenty to talk about. The echoes of their commentary reached Rowland's ears; but he had little taste for unsifted rumour, and he desired a veracious informant. He found one in the person of Madame Grandoni, for whom Mrs. Light and her beautiful daughter were a pair of old friends.

"I have known the mamma for twenty years," said this judicious critic, "and if you ask any of the people who have been living here as long as I, you will find they remember her well. I have held the beautiful Christina on my knee when she was a little wizened baby with a very red face and no promise of beauty but those magnificent eyes. Ten years ago Mrs. Light disappeared, and has not since been seen in Rome, except for a few days last winter, when she passed through on her way to Naples. Then it was you met the trio in the Ludovisi gardens. When I first knew her she was the unmarried but very marriageable daughter of an old American painter of very bad landscapes, which people used to buy from charity and use for fire-boards. His name was Savage; it used to make every one laugh, he was such a mild, melancholy, pitiful old gentleman. He had married a horrible wife, an Englishwoman who had been on the stage. It was said she used to beat poor Savage with his mahl-stick, and, when the domestic finances were low, to lock him up in his studio and tell him he shouldn't come out until he had painted half a

dozen of his daubs. She had a good deal of showy beauty. She would go forth with the key in her pocket, and, her beauty helping, she would make certain people take the pictures. It helped her at last to make an English lord run away with her. At the time I speak of she had quite disappeared. Mrs. Light was then a very handsome girl, though by no means so handsome as her daughter has now become. Mr. Light was an American consul, newly appointed at one of the Adriatic ports. He was a mild, fair-whiskered young man, with some little property, and my impression is that he had got into bad company at home, and that his family procured him his place to keep him out of harm's way. He came up to Rome on a holiday, fell in love with Miss Savage, and married her on the spot. He had not been married three years when he was drowned in the Adriatic, no one ever knew how. The young widow came back to Rome, to her father, and here shortly afterwards, in the shadow of Saint Peter's, her little girl was born. It might have been supposed that Mrs. Light would marry again, and I know she had opportunities. But she overreached herself. She would take nothing less than a title and a fortune, and they were not forthcoming. She was admired and very fond of admiration; very vain, very worldly, very silly. She remained a pretty widow with a surprising variety of bonnets and a dozen men always in her train. Giacosa dates from this period. He calls himself a Roman, but I have an impression he came up from Ancona with her. He was *l'ami de la maison*. He used to hold her bouquets, clean her gloves and satin shoes, run her errands, get her opera-boxes, fight her battles with the shopkeepers. For this he needed courage, for she was smothered in debt. She at last left Rome to escape her creditors. Many of them must remember her still, but she seems now to have money to satisfy them. She left her poor old father here alone—helpless, infirm, and unable to work. A

subscription was shortly afterwards taken up among the foreigners, and he was sent back to America, where, as I finally heard, he died in some sort of asylum. From time to time, for several years, I heard vaguely of Mrs. Light as a wandering beauty at French and German watering-places. Once came a rumour that she was going to make a grand marriage in England: then we heard that the gentleman had thought better of it and left her to keep afloat as she could. She was a terribly scatter-brained creature. She pretends to be a great lady, but I consider that old Filomena, my washerwoman, is in essentials a greater one. But certainly, after all, she has been fortunate. She embarked at last on a lawsuit about some property with her husband's family, and went to America to attend to it. She came back triumphant, with a long purse. She reappeared in Italy, and established herself for a while in Venice. Then she came to Florence, where she spent a couple of years, and where I saw her. Last year she passed down to Naples, which I should have said was just the place for her, and this winter she had laid siege to Rome. She seems very prosperous. She has taken a floor in the Palazzo F——, she keeps her carriage, and Christina and she, between them, must have a pretty milliner's bill. Giacosa has turned up again, looking as if he had been kept in ice at Ancona for her return."

"What sort of education," Rowland asked, "do you imagine the mother's adventures to have been for the daughter?"

"A strange school! But Mrs. Light told me in Florence that she had given her child the education of a princess. In other words, I suppose she speaks three or four languages and has read several hundred French novels. Christina, I suspect, is very clever. When I saw her I was amazed at her beauty, and certainly if there is any truth in faces she ought to have the soul of an angel. Perhaps she has. I don't judge her; she's an extraor-

dinary young person. She has been told twenty times a day by her mother, since she was five years old, that she is a beauty of beauties, that her face is her fortune, and that if she plays her cards she may marry a duke. If she has not been fatally corrupted she is a very superior girl. My own impression is that she is a mixture of good and bad, of ambition and indifference. Mrs. Light having failed to make her own fortune in matrimony has transferred her hopes to her daughter, and nursed them till they have become a monomania. She has a hobby, which she rides in secret; but some day she will let you see it. I am sure that if you go in some evening unannounced, you will find her scanning the tea-leaves in her cup or telling her daughter's fortune with a greasy pack of cards, kept sacredly for the purpose. She promises her a prince—a reigning prince. But if Mrs. Light is a fool she is a practical one, and lest considerations of state should deny her prince the luxury of a love-match she keeps on hand a few common mortals. At the worst she would take a duke, an English lord, or even a young American with a proper number of millions. The poor woman must be rather uncomfortable. She is always building castles and knocking them down again—always casting her nets and pulling them in. If her daughter were less of a beauty her restless ambition would be simply grotesque; but there is something in the girl, as one looks at her, that seems to make it very possible she is marked out for one of those wonderful romantic fortunes that history now and then relates. 'Who, after all, was the Empress of the French?' Mrs. Light is for ever saying. 'And beside Christina the Empress is a dowdy!'"

"And what does Christina say?"

"She makes no scruple, as you know, of saying that her mother is an idiot! What she thinks, Heaven knows. I suspect that practically she does not commit herself. She is excessively proud, and thinks herself

good enough to occupy the highest station in the world; but she knows that her mother talks nonsense, and that even a beautiful girl may look awkward in making unsuccessful advances. So she remains superbly indifferent, and lets her mother take the risks. If the Prince is secured, so much the better; if he is not, she need never confess to herself that even a prince has slighted her."

"Your report is as solid," Rowland said to Madame Grandoni, thanking her, "as if it had been drawn up for the Academy of Sciences;" and he congratulated himself on having listened to it when a couple of days later Mrs. Light and her daughter, attended by the Cavaliere and the poodle, came to his rooms to look at Roderick's statues. It was more comfortable to know just with whom he was dealing.

Mrs. Light was prodigiously gracious, and showered down compliments not only on the statues but on all his possessions. "Upon my word," she said, "you rich young men know how to make yourselves comfortable. If one of us poor women had half as many easy-chairs and nick-nacks we should be famously abused. It's really selfish to be living all alone in such a place as this. Cavaliere, how should you like this suite of rooms and a fortune to fill them with pictures and statues? Christina, love, look at that mosaic table. Mr. Mallet, I could almost beg it from you! Yes, that Eve is certainly very fine. We needn't be ashamed of such a great-grandmother as that. If she was really such a beautiful woman, it accounts for the good looks of some of us. Where is Mr. What's-his-name, the young sculptor? Why isn't he here to be complimented?"

Christina had remained but for a moment in the chair which Rowland placed for her, had given but a cursory glance at the statues, and then, leaving her seat, had begun to wander round the room—looking at herself in the mirror, touching the ornaments and curiosities, glancing at the books and prints. Rowland's sitting-

room was encumbered with *bric-à-brac*, and she found plenty of occupation. Rowland presently joined her and pointed out some of the objects he most valued.

"It's an odd jumble," she said, frankly. "Some things are very pretty—some are very ugly. But I like ugly things when they have a certain look. Prettiness is terribly vulgar nowadays, and it is not every one that knows just the sort of ugliness that has *chic*. But chic is getting dreadfully common too. There's a hint of it even in Madame Baldi's bonnets. I like looking at people's things," she added in a moment, turning to Rowland and resting her eyes on him. "It helps you to find out their characters."

"Am I to suppose," asked Rowland, smiling, "that you have arrived at any conclusions as to mine?"

"I am rather *intriguée*; you have too many things; one seems to contradict another. You are very artistic, and yet you are very prosaic; you have what is called a 'catholic' taste, and yet you are full of obstinate little prejudices and preferences which, if I knew you, I should find very tiresome. I don't think I like you."

"You make a great mistake," laughed Rowland; "I assure you I am very amiable."

"Yes, I am probably wrong, and if I knew you, I should find out I was wrong, and that would irritate me and make me dislike you more. So you see we are necessarily enemies."

"No, I don't dislike you!"

"Worse and worse; for you certainly will not like me."

"You are very discouraging."

"I am fond of facing the truth, though some day you will deny even that. Where is that queer friend of yours?"

"You mean Roderick Hudson? He is represented by these beautiful works."

Miss Light looked for some moments at Roderick's statues. "Yes," she said, "they are not so silly as most

of the things we have seen. They have no chic, and yet they are beautiful."

"You describe them perfectly," said Rowland. "They are beautiful, and yet they have no chic. That's it!"

"If he will promise to put no chic into my bust, I have a mind to let him make it. A request made in those terms deserves to be granted."

"In what terms?"

"Didn't you hear him? 'Mademoiselle, you almost satisfy my conception of the beautiful. I must model your bust.' That *almost* should be rewarded! He is like me, he likes to face the truth. I think we should get on together."

The Cavaliere approached Rowland to express the pleasure he had derived from his beautiful "collection." His smile was exquisitely bland, his accent appealing, flattering, insinuating. But he gave Rowland an odd sense of looking at a little waxen image adjusted to perform certain gestures and emit certain sounds. It had once contained a soul, but the soul had leaked away. Nevertheless, Rowland reflected, there are more graceless things than mere manner and posture in an old-fashioned Italian. And the Cavaliere too had soul enough left to desire to speak a few words on his own account, and call Rowland's attention to the fact that he was not, after all, a hired cicerone, but an ancient Roman gentleman. Rowland felt sorry for him; he hardly knew why. He assured him in a friendly fashion that he must come again; that his house was always at his service. The Cavaliere bowed down to the ground. "You do me too much honour," he murmured. "If you will allow me—it is not impossible!"

Mrs. Light meanwhile had prepared to depart. "If you are not afraid to come and see two quiet little women, we shall be most happy!" she said. "We have no statues nor pictures—we have nothing but each other. Eh, darling?"

"I beg your pardon," said Christina.

"Oh, and the Cavaliere," added her mother.

"The poodle, please!" cried the young girl.

Rowland glanced at the Cavaliere; he was smiling more blandly than ever.

A few days later Rowland presented himself, as civility demanded, at Mrs. Light's door. He found her living in one of the stately houses of the Via dell' Angelo Custode, and rather to his surprise was told she was at home. He passed through half a dozen rooms and was ushered into an immense saloon, at one end of which sat the mistress of the establishment with a piece of embroidery. She received him very graciously, and then pointing mysteriously to a large screen which was unfolded across the embrasure of one of the deep windows, "I am keeping guard!" she said. Rowland looked interrogative; whereupon she beckoned him forward and motioned him to look behind the screen. He obeyed, and for some moments stood gazing. Roderick, with his back turned, stood before an extemporised pedestal, ardently shaping a formless mass of clay. Before him sat Christina Light, in a white dress, with her shoulders bare, her magnificent hair twisted into a classic coil, her head admirably poised. Meeting Rowland's gaze, she smiled a little, only in the depths of her blue-gray eyes, without moving. She looked divinely beautiful.

## IX.

THE brilliant Roman winter came round again, and Rowland enjoyed it in a certain way more deeply than before. He grew passionately, unreasoningly fond of all Roman sights and sensations, and to breathe the Roman atmosphere seemed a needful condition of being. He

could not have defined and explained the nature of his great relish, nor have made up the sum of it by adding together his calculable pleasures. It was a large, vague, idle, half-profitless emotion, of which perhaps the most pertinent thing that may be said is that it brought with it a sort of relaxed acceptance of the present, the actual, the sensuous—of life on the terms of the moment. It was perhaps for this very reason that, in spite of the charm which Rome flings over one's mood, there ran through Rowland's meditations an undertone of melancholy natural enough in a mind which finds its horizon sensibly limited —even by a magic circle. Whether it be that one tacitly concedes to the Roman Church the monopoly of a guarantee of immortality, so that if one is indisposed to bargain with her for the precious gift one must do without it altogether; or whether in an atmosphere so heavily weighted with echoes and memories one grows to believe that there is nothing in one's consciousness that is not foredoomed to moulder and crumble and become dust for the feet and possible malaria for the lungs of future generations—the fact at least remains that one parts half willingly with one's hopes in Rome and misses them only under some very exceptional stress of circumstance. For this reason it may perhaps be said that there is no other place in which one's daily temper has such a mellow serenity, and none at the same time in which acute attacks of depression are more intolerable. Rowland found, in fact, a perfect response to his prevision that to live in Rome was an education to the senses and the imagination; but he sometimes wondered whether this were not a questionable gain in case of one's not being prepared to subside into soft dilettanteism. His customary tolerance of circumstances seemed sometimes to pivot about by a mysterious inward impulse, and look his conscience in the face. "But afterwards . . . ?" it seemed to ask, with a long reverberation; and he could give no answer but a shy affirmation that there was no such thing as to-

morrow, and that to-day was uncommonly fine. He often felt heavy-hearted; he was sombre without knowing why; there were no visible clouds in his heaven, but there were cloud-shadows on his mood. Shadows projected they often were, without his knowing it, by an undue apprehension that things, after all, might not go so ideally well with Roderick. When he caught himself fidgeting it vexed him, and he rebuked himself for taking things unmanfully hard. If Roderick chose to follow a crooked path, it was no fault of his; he had given him, he would continue to give him, all that he had offered him—friendship, sympathy, advice. He had not undertaken to make him over!

If Rowland felt his roots striking and spreading in the Roman soil, Roderick also surrendered himself with renewed liberality to the local influence. More than once he declared to his companion that he meant to live and die within the shadow of St. Peter's, and that he cared little if he should never again draw breath in American air. "For a man of my temperament Rome is the only possible place," he said; "it's better to recognise the fact early than late. So I shall never go home unless I am absolutely forced."

"What is your idea of 'force'?" asked Rowland, smiling. "It seems to me you have an excellent reason for going home some day or other."

"Ah, you mean my engagement?" Roderick answered, with unaverted eyes. "Yes, there is a little understanding of that sort at Northampton!" And he gave a little vaguely appreciative sigh. "To reconcile Northampton and Rome is rather a problem. Mary had better come out here. Even at the worst I have no intention of giving up Rome for six or eight years, and a union deferred for that length of time would be rather absurd."

"Miss Garland could hardly leave your mother," Rowland observed.

"Oh, of course my mother should come! I think I

will suggest it in my next letter. It will take her a year or two to make up her mind to it, but if she consents it will brighten her up. It's too small and dry a life over there, even for a timid old lady. It is hard to imagine," he added, "any change in Mary being a change for the better; but I should like her to take a look at the world, and have her ideas enlarged a little. One is never so good, I suppose, but that one can improve."

"If you wish your mother and Miss Garland to come," Rowland suggested, "you had better go home and bring them."

"Oh, I can't think of leaving Europe for many a day. At present it would quite break the charm. I am just beginning to profit, to get used to things and take them naturally. I am sure the sight of Northampton Main Street would permanently upset me."

It was reassuring to hear that Roderick in his own view was but "just beginning" to spread his wings, and Rowland, if he had had any forebodings, might have suffered them to be modified by this declaration. This was the first time since their meeting at Geneva that Roderick had mentioned his cousin's name, but the ice being broken he indulged for some time afterwards in frequent allusions to his betrothed, which always had an accent of scrupulous, of almost studied, consideration. An uninitiated observer, hearing him, would have imagined her to be a person of a certain age—possibly an affectionate maiden aunt—who had once done him a kindness which he highly appreciated; perhaps presented him with a cheque for a thousand dollars. Rowland noted the difference between his present frankness and his reticence during the first six months of his engagement, and sometimes wondered whether it were not rather an anomaly that he should expatiate more largely as the happy event receded. He had wondered over the whole matter first and last in a great many different ways—he had looked at it in all possible lights. There was

something uncommonly hard to explain in the fact of his having fallen in love with his cousin. She was not, as Rowland conceived her, the sort of girl he would have been likely to fancy, and the operation of sentiment, in all cases so mysterious, was particularly so in this one. Just why it was that Roderick should not in consistency have been captivated, his companion would have been at a loss to say; but I think the conviction had its roots in an unformulated comparison between himself and the accepted suitor. Roderick and he were as different as two men could be, and yet Roderick had taken it into his head to fall in love with a woman for whom he himself had been keeping in reserve for years a deeply characteristic passion. That if Rowland Mallet happened to be very much struck with the merits of Roderick's mistress, the irregularity here was hardly Roderick's, was a view of the case to which our virtuous hero did scanty justice. There were women, he said to himself, whom it was every one's business to fall in love with a little—women beautiful, brilliant, artful, easily fascinating. Miss Light, for instance, was one of these; every man who spoke to her did so, if not in the language, at least with something of the agitation, the divine tremor, of a lover. There were other women—they might have great beauty, they might have small; perhaps they were generally to be classified as plain—whose triumphs in this line were rare, but immutably permanent. Such a one, conspicuously, was Mary Garland. Upon the doctrine of probabilities it was unlikely that she should have had an equal charm for each of them, and was it not possible, therefore, that the charm for Roderick had been simply the charm imagined, unquestionably accepted, the general charm of youth, sympathy, kindness—of the present feminine, in short—enhanced indeed by the advantage of an expressive countenance? The charm in this case for Rowland was—*the* charm!—the mysterious, individual, essential woman. There was an element in the charm,

as his companion saw it, which Rowland was obliged to recognise, but which he forebore to linger upon; the rather important attraction, namely, of reciprocity. As to the girl being in love with Roderick, and commending herself by this accident, this was a point with which his imagination ventured to take no liberties; partly because it would have been indelicate, and partly because it would have been vain. He contented himself with feeling that she was still as vivid an image in his own memory as she had been five days after he left her, and with drifting nearer and nearer to the conviction that at just that crisis any other girl would have answered Roderick's sentimental needs as well. Any other woman, indeed, would do so still! Roderick had confessed as much to him at Geneva in saying that he had been taking at Baden the measure of his susceptibility.

His extraordinary success in modelling the bust of the beautiful Miss Light was pertinent evidence of this amiable quality. She sat to him repeatedly for a fortnight, and the work was rapidly finished. On one of the last days Roderick asked Rowland to come and give his opinion as to what was still wanting; for the sittings had continued to take place in Mrs. Light's apartment, the studio being pronounced too damp for the fair model. When Rowland presented himself, Christina, still in her white dress, with her shoulders bare, was standing before a mirror readjusting her hair, the arrangement of which on this occasion had apparently not met the young sculptor's approval. He stood beside her, directing the operation with a peremptoriness of tone which seemed to Rowland to denote a considerable advance in intimacy. As Rowland entered Christina was losing patience, "Do it yourself, then!" she cried, and with a rapid movement unloosed the great coil of her tresses and let them fall over her shoulders.

They were magnificent, and with her perfect face dividing their rippling flow she looked like some immacu-

late saint of legend being led to martyrdom. Rowland's eyes presumably betrayed his admiration, but her own manifested no consciousness of it. If Christina was a coquette, as the remarkable timeliness of this incident might have suggested, she was not a superficial one.

"Hudson's a sculptor," said Rowland, with warmth. "But if I were only a painter!"

"Thank Heaven you are not!" said Christina. "I am having quite enough of this minute inspection of my charms."

"My dear young man, hands off!" cried Mrs. Light, coming forward and seizing her daughter's hair. "Christina, love, I am surprised."

"Is it indelicate?" Christina asked. "I beg Mr. Mallet's pardon." Mrs. Light gathered up the dusky locks and let them fall through her fingers, glancing at her visitor with a significant smile. Rowland had never been in the East, but if he had attempted to make a sketch of an old slave-merchant calling attention to the "points" of a Circassian beauty, he would have depicted such a smile as Mrs. Light's. "Mamma is not really shocked," added Christina in a moment, as if she had guessed her mother's by-play. "She is only afraid that Mr. Hudson might have injured my hair, and that, *per consequenza*, I should sell for less."

"You unnatural child!" cried mamma. "You deserve that I should make a fright of you!" And with half a dozen skilful passes she twisted the tresses into a single picturesque braid, placed high on the head, as a kind of coronal.

"What does your mother do when she wants to do you justice?" Rowland asked, observing the admirable line of the young girl's neck.

"I do her justice when I say she says very improper things. What is one to do with such a thorn in the flesh?" Mrs. Light demanded.

"Think of it at your leisure, Mr. Mallet," said Chris-

tina, "and when you have discovered something let us hear. But I must tell you that I shall not willingly believe in any remedy of yours, for you have something in the expression of your face that particularly provokes me to make the remarks that my mother so sincerely deplores. I noticed it the first time I saw you. I think it's because your face is so broad. For some reason or other broad faces exasperate me; they fill me with a kind of *rabbia*. Last summer at Carlsbad there was an Austrian count, with enormous estates and some great office at court. He was very attentive—seriously so; he was really very far gone. *Cela ne tenait qu'à moi!* But I couldn't; he was impossible! He must have measured from ear to ear at least a yard and a half. And he was blonde too, which made it worse—as blonde as Stenterello; pure fleece! So I said to him frankly, 'Many thanks, Herr Graf; your uniform is magnificent, but your face is too fat.'"

"I am afraid that mine also," said Rowland, with a smile, "seems just now to have assumed an unpardonable latitude."

"Oh, I take it you know very well that we are looking for a husband, and that none but tremendous swells need apply. Surely before these gentlemen, mamma, I may speak freely; they are disinterested. Mr. Mallet won't do, because, though he is rich, he is not rich enough. Mamma made that discovery the day after we went to see you, moved to it by the promising look of your furniture. I hope she was right, eh? Unless you have millions, you know, you have no chance."

"I feel like a beggar," said Rowland.

"Oh, some better girl than I will decide some day, after mature reflection, that, on the whole, you have enough. Mr. Hudson, of course, is nowhere; he has nothing but his genius and his *beaux yeux*."

Roderick had stood looking at Christiana intently while she delivered herself, softly and slowly, of this sur-

prising nonsense. When she had finished, she turned and looked at him; their eyes met, and he blushed a little. "Let me model you, and he who can may marry you!" he said, abruptly.

Mrs. Light, while her daughter talked, had been adding a few touches to her coiffure. "She is not so silly as you might suppose," she said to Rowland, with dignity. "If you will give me your arm we will go and look at the bust."

"Does that represent a silly girl?" Christina demanded when they stood before it.

Rowland transferred his glance several times from the portrait to the original. "It represents a young lady whom I should not pretend to judge off-hand."

"She may be a fool, but you are not sure. Many thanks! You have seen me half a dozen times. You are either very slow or I am very deep."

"I am certainly slow," said Rowland. "I don't expect to make up my mind about you within six months."

"I give you six months if you will promise then a perfectly frank opinion. Mind, I shall not forget; I shall insist upon it."

"Well, though I am slow I am tolerably brave," said Rowland. "We shall see."

Christina looked at the bust with a sigh. "I am afraid, after all," she said, "that there's very little wisdom in it, save what the artist has put there. Mr. Hudson looked particularly wise while he was working; he scowled and growled, but he never opened his mouth. It is very kind of him not to have represented me yawning."

"If I had felt obliged to talk a lot of rubbish to you," said Roderick, roundly, "the thing would not have been a tenth so good."

"Is it good, after all? Mr. Mallet is a famous connoisseur; has he not come here to pronounce?"

The bust was in fact a very happy performance—Roderick had risen to the level of his subject. It was thoroughly a portrait, and not a vague fantasy executed on a graceful theme, as the busts of pretty women in modern sculpture are apt to be. The resemblance was deep and vivid; there was extreme fidelity of detail, and yet a noble simplicity. One could say of the head that, without idealisation, it was a representation of ideal beauty. Rowland, however, as we know, was not fond of exploding into superlatives, and after examining the piece he contented himself with suggesting two or three alterations of detail.

"Ah, how can you be so cruel?" demanded Mrs. Light, with soft reproachfulness. "It is surely a wonderful thing!"

"Rowland knows it's a wonderful thing," said Roderick, smiling. "I can tell that by his face. The other day I finished something he thought bad, and he looked very differently from this."

"How did Mr. Mallet look?" asked Christina.

"My dear Rowland," said Roderick, "I am speaking of my seated woman. You looked as if you had on a pair of tight boots."

"Ah, my child, you'll not understand that!" cried Mrs. Light. "You never yet had a pair that were small enough."

"It's a pity, Mr. Hudson," said Christina, gravely, "that you could not have introduced my feet into the bust. But we can hang a pair of slippers round the neck!"

"I nevertheless like your statues, Roderick," Rowland rejoined, "better than your jokes. This is admirable. Miss Light, you may be proud!"

"Thank you, Mr. Mallet, for the permission," rejoined the young girl.

"I am dying to see it in the marble, with a red velvet screen behind it," said Mrs. Light.

"Placed there under the Sassoferrato!" Christina went on. "I hope you keep well in mind, Mr. Hudson, that you have not a grain of property in your work, and that if mamma chooses she may have it photographed, and the copies sold in the Piazza di Spagna at five francs apiece, without your having a sou of the profits."

"Amen!" said Roderick. "It was so nominated in the bond. My profits are here!" and he tapped his forehead.

"It would be prettier if you said *here!*" And Christina touched her heart.

"My precious child, how you do run on!" murmured Mrs. Light.

"It is Mr. Mallet," the young girl answered. "I can't talk a word of sense so long as he is in the room. I don't say that to make you go," she added; "I say it simply to justify myself."

"The noble art of self-defence!" said Rowland.

Roderick declared that he must get at work, and requested Christina to take her usual position, and Mrs. Light proposed to her visitor that they should adjourn to her boudoir. This was a small room, hardly more spacious than an alcove, opening out of the drawing-room and having no other issue. Here, as they entered, on a divan near the door, Rowland perceived the Cavaliere Giacosa, with his arms folded, his head dropped upon his breast, and his eyes closed.

"Sleeping at his post!" said Rowland, smiling.

"That's a punishable offence," rejoined Mrs. Light, sharply. She was on the point of calling him in the same tone, when he suddenly opened his eyes, stared a moment, and then rose with a smile and a bow.

"Excuse me, dear lady," he said, "I was overcome by the—the great heat."

"Nonsense, Cavaliere!" cried the lady, "you know we are perishing here with the cold! You had better go and cool yourself in one of the other rooms."

"I obey, dear lady," said the Cavaliere; and with another salutation to Rowland he departed, walking very discreetly on his toes. Rowland outstayed him but a short time, for he was not fond of Mrs. Light, and he found nothing very inspiring in her frank intimation that if he chose he might become a favourite. He was disgusted with himself for pleasing her; he confounded his fatal urbanity. In the courtyard of the palace he overtook the Cavaliere, who had stopped at the porter's lodge to say a word to his little girl. She was a young lady of very tender years, and she wore a very dirty pinafore. He had taken her up in his arms and was singing an infantine rhyme to her, and she was staring at him with big soft Roman eyes. On seeing Rowland he put her down with a kiss, and stepped forward with a conscious grin, an unresentful admission that he was sensitive both to chubbiness and to ridicule. Rowland began to pity him again; he had taken his dismissal from the drawing-room so meekly.

"You don't keep your promise to come and see me," said the young man. "Don't forget it. I want you to tell me about Rome thirty years ago."

"Thirty years ago? Ah, dear sir, Rome is Rome still; a place where strange things happen! But happy things too, since I have your renewed permission to call. You do me too much honour. Is it in the morning or in the evening that I should least intrude?"

"Take your own time, Cavaliere; only come some time. I depend upon you," said Rowland.

The Cavaliere thanked him with a humble obeisance. To old Giacosa too, he felt that he was, in Roman phrase, sympathetic; but the idea of pleasing this extremely reduced gentleman was not disagreeable to him.

Miss Light's bust stood for a while on exhibition in Roderick's studio, and half the foreign colony came to see it. With the completion of his work, however, Roderick's visits at the Palazzo F—— by no means came

to an end. He spent half his time in Mrs. Light's drawing-room, and began to be talked about as "attentive" to Christina. The success of the bust restored his equanimity, and in the garrulity of his good-humour he suffered Rowland to see that she was just now the object uppermost in his thoughts. Rowland, when they talked of her, was rather listener than speaker; partly because Roderick's own tone was so resonant and exultant, and partly because, when his companion laughed at him for having called her unsafe, he was too perplexed to defend himself. The impression remained that she was unsafe; that she was a complex, wilful, passionate creature, who might easily engulph a too confiding spirit in the eddies of her capricious temper. And yet he strongly felt her charm; the eddies had a strange fascination! Roderick, in the glow of that renewed admiration provoked by the fixed attention of portrayal, was never weary of descanting on the extraordinary perfection of her beauty.

"I had no idea of it," he said, "till I began to look at her with an eye to reproducing line for line and curve for curve. Her face is the most exquisite piece of modelling that ever came from creative hands. Not a line without meaning, not a hair's-breadth that is not admirably finished. And then her mouth! It is as if a pair of lips had been shaped to utter pure truth without doing it dishonour!" Later, after he had been working for a week, he declared that if the girl had been inordinately plain she would still be the most fascinating of women. "I have quite forgotten her beauty," he said, "or rather, I have ceased to perceive it as something distinct and defined, something independent to the rest of her. She is all one, and all consummately interesting!"

"What does she do—what does she say, that is so remarkable?" Rowland had asked.

"Say? Sometimes nothing—sometimes everything. She is never the same. Sometimes she walks in and takes her place without a word, without a smile, gravely,

stiffly, as if it were an awful bore. She hardly looks at me, and she walks away without even glancing at my work. On other days she laughs and chatters and asks endless questions and pours out the most irresistible nonsense. She is a creature of moods; you can't count upon her; she keeps observation on the stretch. And then, bless you, she has seen so much of the world! Her talk is full of the strangest allusions!"

"It is altogether a very singular type of young lady," said Rowland, after the visit which I have related at length. "It may be a charm, but it is certainly not the orthodox charm of marriageable maidenhood, the charm of shrinking innocence and soft docility. Our American girls are accused of being more knowing than any others, and this wonderful damsel is nominally an American. But it has taken twenty years of Europe to make her what she is! The first time we saw her, I remember you called her a product of the old world, and certainly you were not far wrong."

"Ah, she has an atmosphere," said Roderick, in a tone of high appreciation.

"Young unmarried women should be careful not to have too much!"

"Ah, you don't forgive her for hitting you so hard! A man ought to be flattered at such a girl as that taking so much notice of him."

"A man is never flattered at a woman's not liking him," said Rowland.

"Are you sure she doesn't like you? That's to the credit of your humility. A fellow of more vanity might, on the evidence, persuade himself that he was in favour."

"He would have also," said Rowland, laughing, "to be a fellow of remarkable ingenuity!" He asked himself privately how the deuce Roderick reconciled it to his conscience to think so much more of the girl he was not engaged to than of the other. But it amounted

almost to arrogance in poor Rowland, you may say, to pretend to know how often Roderick thought of Mary Garland. He wondered gloomily, at any rate, whether for men of his companion's large easy power there was not a larger moral law than for narrow mediocrities like himself, who, yielding Nature a meagre interest on her investment (such as it was), had no reason to expect from her this affectionate laxity as to their accounts. Was it not a part of the eternal fitness of things that Roderick, while rhapsodising about Christina Light, should have it at his command to look at you with eyes of the most guileless and unclouded blue, and to shake off your musty imputations by a toss of his picturesque brown locks? or had he, in fact, no conscience to speak of? Happy fellow either way!

Our friend Gloriani came, among others, to congratulate Roderick on his model, and what he had made of her. "Devilish pretty, through and through!" he said, as he looked at the bust. "Capital handling of the neck and throat; lovely work on the nose. You are a detestably lucky fellow, my boy! But you ought not to have squandered such material on a simple bust; you should have made a great imaginative figure. If I could only have got hold of her I would have put her into a statue in spite of herself. What a pity she is not a ragged Trasteverine whom we might have for a franc an hour! I have been carrying about in my head for years a delicious design for a fantastic figure, but it has always stayed there for want of a tolerable model. I have seen intimations of the type, but this consummate creature is the perfection of it. As soon as I saw her I said to myself, 'By Jove, there's my statue in the flesh!'"

"What is your subject?" asked Roderick.

"Don't take it ill," said Gloriani "You know I am the very deuce for observation. She would make a magnificent Herodias!"

If Roderick had taken it ill (which was unlikely, for

we know he thought Gloriani an ass and expected little of his wisdom), he might have been soothed by the candid incense of Sam Singleton, who came and sat for an hour in a sort of mental prostration before both bust and artist. But Roderick's attitude in regard to his patient little devotee was one of undisguised, though friendly amusement; and, indeed, from a strictly plastic point of view the poor fellow's diminutive stature and grotesque physiognomy were a bribe to levity. "Ah, don't envy our friend," Rowland said to Singleton afterwards, on his expressing with a little groan of depreciation of his own paltry performances his sense of the brilliancy of Roderick's talent. "You sail nearer the shore, but you sail in smoother waters. Be contented with what you are, and paint me another picture."

"Oh, I don't envy Hudson anything he possesses," Singleton said, "because to take anything away would spoil his beautiful completeness. 'Complete,' that's what he is; while we little clevernesses are like half ripened plums, only good eating on the side that has had a glimpse of the sun. Nature has made him so, and fortune confesses to it! He is the handsomest fellow in Rome, he has the most genius, and as a matter of course the most beautiful girl in the world comes and offers to be his model. If that is not completeness where shall we find it?"

## X.

ONE morning, going into Roderick's studio, Rowland found the young sculptor entertaining Miss Blanchard—if this is not too flattering a description of his gracefully passive tolerance of her presence. He had never liked her, and never climbed into her sky studio to observe her

wonderful manipulation of petals. He had once quoted Tennyson against her—

> "And is there any moral shut
> Within the bosom of the rose?"

"In all Miss Blanchard's roses you may be sure there is a moral," he had said. "You can see it sticking out its head, and if you go to smell the flower it scratches your nose." But on this occasion she had come with a propitiatory gift—introducing her friend Mr. Leavenworth. Mr. Leavenworth was a tall, expansive, bland gentleman, with a carefully-brushed whisker and a spacious, fair, well-favoured face, which seemed somehow to have more room in it than was occupied by a smile of superior benevolence, so that (with his smooth white forehead) it bore a certain resemblance to a large parlour with a very florid carpet, but no pictures on the walls. He held his head high, talked impressively, and told Roderick within five minutes that he was a widower, travelling to distract his mind, and that he had lately retired from the proprietorship of large mines of borax in Pennsylvania. Roderick supposed at first that under the influence of his bereavement he had come to order a tombstone; but observing the extreme blandness of his address to Miss Blanchard he credited him with a judicious prevision that by the time the tombstone should be completed, (a monument of his inconsolability might have become an anachronism.) Mr. Leavenworth, however, was disposed to order something.

"You will find me eager to patronise our indigenous talent," he said. "You may be sure that I have employed a native architect for the large residential structure that I am erecting on the banks of the Ohio. I have sustained a considerable loss; but are we not told that art is a consolation? That's why I have come to you, sir. In a tasteful home, surrounded by the memorials of my wanderings, I hope to recover my moral tone.

I ordered in Paris the complete appurtenances of a dining-room. Do you think you could do something for my library? It is to be filled with well-selected authors, and I think a pure white image in this style"—pointing to one of Roderick's statues—"standing out against the morocco and gilt, would have a noble effect. The subject I have already fixed upon. I desire an allegorical representation of Culture. Do you think now," asked Mr. Leavenworth, encouragingly, "you could rise to the conception?"

"A most interesting subject for a truly serious mind," remarked Miss Blanchard.

Roderick looked at her a moment, and then—"The simplest thing I could do," he said, "would be to make a full-length portrait of Miss Blanchard. I could give her a scroll in her hand, and that would do for the allegory."

Miss Blanchard coloured; the compliment might be ironical; and there was ever afterwards a reflection of her uncertainty in her opinion of Roderick's genius. Mr. Leavenworth responded that, with all deference to Miss Blanchard's beauty, he desired something colder, more monumental, more impersonal. "If I were to be the happy possessor of a likeness of Miss Blanchard," he added, "I should prefer to have it in no factitious disguise!"

Roderick consented to entertain the proposal, and while they were discussing it, Rowland had a little talk with the judicious Augusta. "Who is your friend?" he asked.

"A very worthy man. The architect of his own fortune—which is magnificent. One of nature's gentlemen!"

This was a trifle sententious, and Rowland turned to the bust of Miss Light. Like every one else in Rome by this time, Miss Blanchard had an opinion on the young girl's beauty, and in her own fashion she expressed it in

a quotable phrase. "She looks half like a Madonna and half like a *ballerina!*"

Mr. Leavenworth and Roderick came to an understanding, and the young sculptor good-naturedly promised to do his best to rise to his patron's conception. "His conception be hanged!" Roderick exclaimed, after he had departed. "His conception is sitting on an india-rubber cushion, with a pen in her ear and the lists of the stock exchange in her hand. I shall have to invent something myself. For the money I ought to be able to!"

Mrs. Light meanwhile had fairly established herself in Roman society. "Heaven knows how!" Madame Grandoni said to Rowland, who had mentioned to her several evidences of the lady's prosperity. "In such a case there is nothing like audacity. A month ago she knew no one but her washerwoman, and now I am told that the cards of Roman princesses are to be seen on her table. She is evidently determined to play a great part, and she has the wit to perceive that, to make remunerative acquaintances, you must seem yourself to be worth knowing. You must have striking rooms and a bewildering variety of dresses; you must give dinners and dances and concerts. She is spending a lot of money, and you'll see that in two or three weeks she will take upon herself to open the season by giving a magnificent ball. Of course it is Christina's beauty that floats her. People go to see her because they are curious."

"And they go again because they are charmed," said Rowland. "Miss Christina is a very remarkable young woman."

"Oh, I know it well; I had occasion to say so to myself the other day. She came to see me of her own free will, and for an hour she was deeply interesting. I think she is an actress, but she believes in her part while she is playing it. She took it into her head the other day to believe that she was very unhappy, and she sat there, where you are sitting, and told me a tale of her

miseries which brought tears into my eyes. She cried profusely, and as naturally as possible. She said she was weary of life, and that she knew no one but me she could speak frankly to. She must speak, or she should go mad. She sobbed as if her heart would break. I assure you it's well for you susceptible young men that you don't see her when she sobs. She said in so many words that her mother was an immoral woman. Heaven knows what she meant! She meant, I suppose, that she makes debts that she knows she can't pay. She said the life they led was horrible; that it was monstrous a poor girl should be dragged about the world to be sold to the highest bidder. She was meant for better things; she could be perfectly happy in poverty. It was not money she wanted. I might not believe her, but she really cared for serious things. Sometimes she thought of taking poison!"

"What did you say to that?"

"I recommended her to come and see me instead. I would help her about as much, and I was, on the whole, less unpleasant. Of course I could help her only by letting her talk herself out, and kissing her, and patting her beautiful hands, and telling her to be patient and she would be happy yet. About once in two months I expect her to reappear on the same errand, and meanwhile to quite forget my existence. I believe I melted to the point of telling her that I would find some good, kind, quiet husband for her; but she declared, almost with fury, that she was sick of the very name of husbands, which she begged I would never mention again. And in fact it was a rash offer; for I am sure that there is not a man of the kind that might really make a woman happy but would be afraid to marry mademoiselle. Looked at in that way she is certainly very much to be pitied, and, indeed, altogether, though I don't think she either means all she says, or, by a great deal, says all that she means, I feel very sorry for her."

Rowland met the two ladies about this time at several entertainments, and looked at Christina with a kind of imaginative *attendrissement*. He suspected more than once that there had been a passionate scene between them about coming out, and he wondered what arguments Mrs. Light had found effective. But Christina's face told no tales, and she moved about, beautiful and silent, looking absently over people's heads, barely heeding the men who pressed about her, and suggesting somehow that the soul of a world-wearied mortal had found its way into the blooming body of a goddess. "Where in the world has Miss Light been before she is twenty," observers asked, "to have left all her illusions behind?" And the general verdict was that, though she was incomparably beautiful, she was intolerably proud. Young ladies to whom the former distinction was not conceded were free to reflect that she was "not at all liked."

It would have been difficult to guess, however, how they reconciled this conviction with a variety of contradictory evidence, and in especial with the spectacle of Roderick's inveterate devotion. All Rome might behold that he at least "liked" Christina Light. Wherever she appeared he was either awaiting her or immediately followed her. He was perpetually at her side, trying apparently to preserve some broken thread of talk, the fate of which was, to judge by her face, profoundly immaterial to the young lady. People in general smiled at the radiant good faith of the handsome young sculptor, and asked each other whether he really supposed that beauties of that quality were meant to give themselves to juvenile artists. But although Christina's deportment, as I have said, was one of superb inexpressiveness, Rowland had derived from Roderick no suspicion that he suffered from snubbing, and he was therefore surprised at an incident that occurred one evening at a large musical party. Roderick, as usual, was in the field, and on the ladies taking the chairs which had been arranged for them he

immediately placed himself beside Christina. As most of the gentlemen were standing, his position made him as conspicuous as Hamlet at Ophelia's feet. Rowland was leaning somewhat apart, against the chimney-piece. There was a long solemn pause before the music began, and in the midst of it Christina rose, left her place, came the whole length of the immense room, with every one looking at her, and stopped before him. She was neither pale nor flushed; she had a soft smile.

"Will you do me a favour?" she asked.

"A thousand!"

"Not now, but at your earliest convenience. Please remind Mr. Hudson that he is not in a New England village—that it is not the custom in Rome to address one's conversation exclusively, night after night, to the same poor girl, and that——"

The music broke out with a great blare and covered her voice. She made a gesture of impatience, and Rowland offered her his arm and led her back to her seat.

The next day he repeated her words to Roderick, who burst into joyous laughter. "She has a delightful unexpectedness!" he cried. "She must do everything that comes into her head!"

"Had she never asked you before not to talk to her so much?"

"On the contrary, she has often said to me, 'Mind you now, I forbid you to leave me. Here comes that tiresome So-and-so.' She cares as little about the custom as I do. What could be a better proof than her walking up to you with five hundred people looking at her? Is that the custom for young girls in Rome?"

"Why, then, should she take such a step?"

"Because as she sat there it came into her head. That's reason enough for her! I have imagined she wishes me well, as they say here—though she has never distinguished me in such a way as that!"

Madame Grandoni had foretold the truth; Mrs. Light a couple of weeks later convoked all Roman society to a brilliant ball. Rowland went late, and found the staircase so encumbered with flower-pots and servants that he was a long time making his way into the presence of the hostess. At last he approached her as she stood making curtsies at the door with her daughter by her side. Some of Mrs. Light's curtsies were very low, for she had the happiness of receiving a number of the social potentates of the Roman world. She was rosy with triumph, to say nothing of a less metaphysical cause, and was evidently vastly contented with herself, with her company, and with the general attitude of destiny. Her daughter was less overtly jubilant, and distributed her greetings with impartial frigidity. She had never been so beautiful. Dressed simply in vaporous white, relieved with half a dozen white roses, the perfection of her features and of her person, and the mysterious depth of her expression, seemed to glow with the white light of a splendid pearl. She recognised no one individually, and made her salutation slowly, gravely, with her eyes on the ground. Rowland fancied that, as he stood before her, her obeisance was slightly exaggerated, as with an intention of irony; but he smiled philosophically to himself, and reflected as he passed on that if she disliked him he had nothing to reproach himself with. He walked about, had a few words with Miss Blanchard, who, with a fillet of cameos in her hair, was leaning on the arm of Mr. Leavenworth, and at last came upon the Cavaliere Giacosa, modestly stationed in a corner. The little gentleman's coat lappet was decorated with an enormous bouquet, and his neck encased in a voluminous white handkerchief of the fashion of thirty years ago. His arms were folded, and he was surveying the scene with contracted eyelids, through which you saw the glitter of his intensely dark vivacious pupil. He immediately embarked on an elaborate apology for not having yet

manifested as he felt it his sense of the honour Rowland had done him.

"I am always on service with these ladies, you see," he explained, "and that is a duty to which one would not willingly be faithless for an instant."

"Evidently," said Rowland, "you are a very devoted friend. Mrs. Light, in her situation, is very happy in having you."

"We are old friends," said the Cavaliere, gravely. "Old friends. I knew the signora many years ago, when she was the prettiest woman in Rome—or rather in Ancona, which is even better. The beautiful Christina now is perhaps the most beautiful young girl in Europe!"

"Very likely," said Rowland.

"Very well, sir, I taught her to read; I guided her little hands to touch the piano." And at these faded memories the Cavaliere's eyes glittered more brightly. Rowland half expected him to proceed with a little flash of long-repressed passion, "And now—and now, sir, they treat me as you observed the other day!" But the Cavaliere only looked out at him keenly from among his wrinkles, and seemed to say with all the vividness of the Italian glance, "Oh, I say nothing more. I am not so shallow as to complain!"

Evidently the Cavaliere was not shallow, and Rowland repeated respectfully, "You are a devoted friend."

"That's very true. I am a devoted friend. A man may do himself justice after twenty years!"

Rowland after a pause made some remark about the beauty of the ball. It was very brilliant.

"Stupendous!" said the Cavaliere, solemnly. "It is a great day. We have four Roman princes, to say nothing of others." And he counted them over on his fingers and held up his hand triumphantly. "And there she stands, the girl to whom I—I, Giuseppe Giacosa—taught her alphabet and her piano scales; there she stands in her

incomparable beauty, and Roman princes come and bow to her! Here, in his quiet corner, her old master permits himself to be proud."

"It is very friendly of him," said Rowland, smiling.

The Cavaliere contracted his lids a little more and gave another keen glance. "It is very natural, signore. The Christina is a good girl; she remembers my little services. But here comes," he added in a moment, "the young Prince of the Fine Arts. I am sure he has bowed lowest of all."

Rowland looked round and saw Roderick moving slowly across the room and casting about him his usual luminous, unshrinking looks. He presently joined them, nodded familiarly to the Cavaliere, and immediately demanded of Rowland, "Have you seen her?"

"I have seen Miss Light," said Rowland. "She's magnificent."

"I'm intoxicated with her beauty!" cried Roderick; so loud that several persons turned round.

Rowland saw that he was flushed, and laid his hand on his arm. Roderick was trembling. "If you will go away," Rowland said, instantly, "I will go with you."

"Go away?" cried Roderick, almost angrily. "I intend to dance with her!"

The Cavaliere had been watching him attentively; he gently laid his hand on his other arm. "Softly, softly, dear young man," he said. "Let me speak to you as a friend."

"Oh, speak even as an enemy and I shall not mind it," Roderick answered, frowning.

"Be very reasonable then, and go away."

"Why the devil should I go away?"

"Because you are in love," said the Cavaliere.

"I might as well be in love here as in the streets."

"Carry your love as far as possible from Christina. She will not listen to you—she can't."

"She 'can't'?" demanded Roderick. "She is not

a person of whom you may say that. She can if she will; she does as she chooses."

"Up to a certain point. It would take too long to explain; I only beg you to believe that if you continue to love Miss Light you will be very unhappy. Have you a princely title? have you a princely fortune? Otherwise you can never have her."

And the Cavaliere folded his arms again, like a man who has done his duty. Roderick wiped his forehead and looked askance at Rowland; he seemed to be guessing his thoughts, and they made him blush a little. But he smiled blandly, and addressing the Cavaliere, "I am much obliged to you for the information," he said. "Now that I have obtained it, let me tell you that I am no more in love with Miss Light than you are. My friend here knows that. I admire her—yes, immensely. But that's no one's business but my own, and though I have, as you say, neither a princely title nor a princely fortune, I mean to suffer neither those advantages nor those who possess them to diminish my right."

"If you are not in love, my dear young man," said the Cavaliere, with his hand on his heart and an apologetic smile, "so much the better! But let me entreat you as an affectionate friend to keep a watch on your emotions. You are young, you are handsome, you have a brilliant genius and a generous heart, but—I may say it almost with authority—Christina is not for you!"

Whether Roderick were in love or not, he was nettled by what apparently seemed to him an obtrusive negation of an inspiring possibility. "You speak as if she had made her choice!" he cried. "Without pretending to confidential information on the subject, I am sure she has not."

"No, but she must make it soon," said the Cavaliere. And raising his forefinger, he laid it against his under lip. "She must choose a name and a fortune—and she will!"

"She will do exactly as her inclination prompts! She will marry the man who pleases her, if he hasn't a dollar! I know her better than you."

The Cavaliere turned a little paler than usual, and smiled more urbanely. "No, no, my dear young man, you do not know her better than I. You have not watched her day by day for twenty years. I too have admired her. She is a good girl; she has never said an unkind word to me; the blessed Virgin be thanked! But she must have a brilliant destiny; it has been marked out for her and she will submit. You had better believe me; it may save you much suffering."

"We shall see!" said Roderick, with an excited laugh.

"Certainly we shall see. But I retire from the discussion," the Cavaliere added. "I have no wish to provoke you to attempt to prove to me that I am wrong. You are already excited."

"No more than is natural to a man who in an hour or so is to dance a cotillon with a divinity."

"A cotillon? has she promised?"

Roderick patted the air with a grand confidence. "You'll see!" His gesture might almost have been taken to mean that the state of his relations with the "divinity" was such that they quite dispensed with vain preliminaries.

The Cavaliere gave an exaggerated shrug. "You will make a great many mourners!"

"He has made a mourner already!" Rowland murmured to himself. This was evidently not the first time that reference had been made between Roderick and the Cavaliere to the young man's possible passion, and Roderick had failed to consider it the simplest and most natural course to say in three words to the vigilant little gentleman that there was no cause for alarm—his affections were preoccupied. Rowland hoped silently with some dryness that his motives for reticence were of a finer kind than they seemed to be. He turned away;

ritating to look at Roderick's radiant unscrupu-
:rness. The tide was setting towards the supper
ıd he drifted with it to the door. The crowd at
t was dense, and he was obliged to wait for some
before he could advance. At last he felt his
ırs dividing behind him, and turning he saw
ı pressing her way forward alone. She was
at no one, and save for the fact of her being
)u would not have supposed she was in her
house. As she recognised Rowland she
l to him, took his arm, and motioned him to
into the supper room. She said nothing until
forced a passage and they stood somewhat

e me into the most out-of-the-way corner you
," she then said, "and then go and get me a
bread."

hing more? There seems to be everything con-
"

imple roll. Nothing more, on your peril. Only
nething for yourself."

med to Rowland that the embrasure of a window
ıres in Roman palaces are deep) was a retreat
ly obscure for Christina to execute whatever
ıe might have contrived against his equanimity.
after he had found her a seat, was easily pro-
As he presented it, he remarked that, frankly
;, he was at a loss to understand why she should
:cted for the honour of a *tête-à-tête* an individual
n she had so little taste.

yes, I dislike you!" said Christina. "To tell
ı, I had forgotten it. There are so many people
)m I dislike more, that when I espied you just
ı seemed like an intimate friend. But I have
: into this corner to talk nonsense," she went on.
ıust not think I always do, eh?"

ave never heard you do anything else," said

Rowland, deliberately, having decided that he owed her no compliments.

"Very good. I like your frankness. It's quite true. You see I am a strange girl. To begin with, I am frightfully egotistical. Don't flatter yourself you have said anything very clever if you ever take it into your head to tell me so. I know it much better than you. So it is, I can't help it. I am tired to death of myself; I would give all I possess to get out of myself; but somehow at the end I find myself so vastly more interesting than nine-tenths of the people I meet. If a person wished to do me a favour I would say to him, 'I beg you with tears in my eyes to interest me. Be strong, be positive, be imperious, if you will; only be *something*—something that in looking at I can forget my detestable self!' Perhaps that is nonsense too. If it is, I can't help it. I can only apologise for the nonsense that I know to be such, and that I talk—oh, for more reasons than I can tell you! I wonder whether if I were to try you would understand me."

"I am afraid I should never understand," said Rowland, "why a person should willingly talk nonsense."

"That proves how little you know about women. But I like your frankness. When I told you the other day that you displeased me, I had an idea you were more formal—how do you say it?—more *guindé*. I am very capricious. To-night I like you better."

"Oh, I am not *guindé*," said Rowland, gravely.

"I beg your pardon, then, for thinking so. Now I have an idea that you would make a useful friend—an intimate friend—a friend to whom one could tell everything. For such a friend what wouldn't I give!"

Rowland looked at her in some perplexity. Was this touching sincerity or unfathomable coquetry? Her beautiful eyes looked divinely candid; but then, if candour was beautiful, beauty was apt to be subtle. "I hesitate to recommend myself out and out for the office,"

he said, "but I believe that if you were to depend upon me for anything that a friend may do I should not be found wanting."

"Very good. One of the first things one asks of a friend is to judge one not by isolated acts, but by one's whole conduct. I care for your opinion—I don't know why."

"Nor do I, I confess!" said Rowland, with a laugh.

"What do you think of this affair?" she continued, without heeding his laugh.

"Of your ball? Why, it's a very grand affair."

"It's horrible—that's what it is! It's a mere rabble! There are people here whom I never saw before, people who were never asked. Mamma went about inviting every one, asking other people to invite any one they knew, doing anything to have a crowd. I hope she is satisfied! It is not my doing. I feel weary, I feel angry, I feel like crying. I have twenty minds to escape into my room and lock the door, and let mamma go on with it as she can. By the way," she added, in a moment, without a visible reason for the transition, "can you tell me something to read?"

Rowland stared at the disconnectedness of the question.

"Can you recommend me some books?" she repeated. "I know you are a great reader. I have no one else to ask. We can buy no books. We can make debts for jewellery and bonnets and ten-button gloves, but we can't spend a sou for ideas. And yet, though you may not believe it, I like ideas quite as well."

"I shall be most happy to lend you some books," Rowland said. "I will pick some out to-morrow and send them to you."

"No novels, please! I am tired of novels. I can imagine better stories for myself than any I read. Some good poetry, if there is such a thing nowadays, and some memoirs and histories and books of facts."

"You shall be served. Your taste agrees with my own."

She was silent a moment, looking at him. Then suddenly—"Tell me something about Mr. Hudson," she exclaimed. "You are great friends!"

"Oh yes," said Rowland; "we are great friends."

"Tell me about him. Come, begin!"

"Where shall I begin? You know him for yourself."

"No, I don't know him; I don't find him so easy to know. Since he has finished my bust and begun to come here disinterestedly, he has become a great talker. He says very fine things; but does he mean all he says?"

"Few of us do that."

"You do, I imagine. You ought to know, for he tells me you discovered him." Rowland was silent, and Christina continued, "Do you consider him very clever?"

"Unquestionably."

"His talent is really something out of the common way?"

"So it seems to me."

"In short, he is a man of genius?"

"Yes, call it genius."

"And you found him vegetating in a little village, and took him by the hand and set him on his feet in Rome?"

"Is that the popular legend?" asked Rowland.

"Oh, you needn't be modest. There was no great merit in it; there would have been none at least on my part in the same circumstances. Real geniuses are not so common, and if I had discovered one in the wilderness, I should have brought him out in the market-place to see how he would behave. It would be excessively amusing. You must find it so to watch Mr. Hudson, eh? Tell me this: do you think he is going to be a great man—become famous, have his life written, and all that?"

"I don't prophesy, but I have good hopes."

Christina was silent. She stretched out her bare arm and looked at it a moment absently, turning it so as to

see—or almost to see—the dimple in her elbow. This was apparently a frequent gesture with her; Rowland had already observed it. It was as coolly and naturally done as if she had been alone before her toilet-table. "So he is a man of genius," she suddenly resumed. "Don't you think I ought to be extremely flattered to have a man of genius perpetually hanging about? He is the first I ever saw, but I should have known he was not a common mortal. There is something strange about him. To begin with, he has no manners. You may say that it's not for me to blame him, for I have none myself. That's very true, but the difference is that I can have them when I wish to (and very charming ones too; I will show you some day); whereas Mr. Hudson will never have them. And yet somehow one sees he is a gentleman. He seems to have something urging, driving, pushing him, making him restless and defiant. You see it in his eyes. They are the finest, by the way, I ever saw. When a person has such eyes as that, you can forgive him his bad manners. I suppose that is what they call the sacred fire."

Rowland made no answer except to ask her in a moment if she would have another roll. She merely shook her head and went on—

"Tell me how you found him. Where was he—how was he?"

"He was in a place called Northampton. Did you ever hear of it? He was studying law—but not learning it."

"It appears it was something horrible, eh?"

"Something horrible?"

"This little village. No society, no pleasures, no beauty, no life."

"You have received a false impression. Northampton is not so gay as Rome, but Roderick had some charming friends."

"Tell me about them. Who were they?"

"Well, there was my cousin, through whom I made his acquaintance—a delightful woman."

"Young—pretty?"

"Yes, a good deal of both. And very clever."

"Did he make love to her?"

"Not in the least."

"Well, who else?"

"He lived with his mother. She is the best of women."

"Ah yes, I know all that one's mother is. But she does not count as society. And who else?"

Rowland hesitated. He wondered whether Christina's insistence were the result of a general interest in Roderick's antecedents or of a particular suspicion. He looked at her; she was looking at him a little askance, waiting for his answer. As Roderick had said nothing about his engagement to the Cavaliere, it was probable that with this beautiful girl he had not been more explicit. And yet the thing was announced, it was public; that other girl was happy in it, proud of it. Rowland felt a kind of dumb anger rising in his heart. He deliberated a moment intently.

"What are you frowning at?" Christina asked.

"There was another person," he answered, "the most important of all—the young girl to whom he is engaged."

Christina stared a moment, raising her eyebrows. "Ah, Mr. Hudson is engaged?" she said, very simply. "Is she pretty?"

"She is not called a beauty." Rowland meant to practise great brevity, but in a moment he added, "I have seen beauties, however, who pleased me less."

"Ah, she pleases *you* too? Why don't they marry?"

"Roderick is waiting till he can afford to marry."

Christina slowly put out her arm again and looked at the dimple in her elbow. "Ah, he's engaged?" she repeated in the same tone. "He never told me."

Rowland perceived at this moment that the people about them were beginning to return to the dancing room, and immediately afterwards he saw Roderick making his way towards themselves. Roderick presented himself before Miss Light.

"I don't claim that you have promised me the cotillon," he said, "but I consider that you have given me hopes which warrant the confidence that you will dance with me."

Christina looked at him a moment. "Certainly I have made no promises," she said. "It seemed to me that, as the daughter of the house, I should keep myself free, and let it depend on circumstances."

"I beseech you to dance with me!" said Roderick, with vehemence.

Christina rose and began to laugh. "You say that very well, but the Italians do it better."

This assertion seemed likely to be put to the proof. Mrs. Light hastily approached, leading, rather than led by, a tall slim young man, of an unmistakably Southern physiognomy. "My precious love," she cried, "what a place to hide in! We have been looking for you for twenty minutes; I have chosen a cavalier for you—and chosen well!"

The young man disengaged himself, made a ceremonious bow, joined his two hands, and murmured with an ecstatic smile, "May I venture to hope, dear signorina, for the honour of your hand?"

"Of course you may!" said Mrs. Light. "The honour is for us!"

Christina hesitated but for a moment, then swept the young man a curtsey as profound as his own salutation. "You are very kind, but you are too late. I have just accepted!"

"Ah, my own darling!" murmured—almost moaned—Mrs. Light.

Christina and Roderick exchanged a single glance—

a glance brilliant on each side. She passed her hand into his arm; he tossed his clustering locks and led her away.

A short time afterwards Rowland saw the young man she had rejected leaning against a doorway. He was ugly, but what is called distinguished-looking. He had a heavy black eye, a sallow complexion, a long thin neck; his hair was cropped *en brosse*. He looked very young, yet extremely bored. He was staring at the ceiling, and stroking an imperceptible moustache. Rowland espied the Cavaliere Giacosa hard by, and having joined him asked him the young man's name.

"Oh," said the Cavaliere, "he is a *pezzo grosso!* A Neapolitan. Prince Casamassima."

## XI.

One day on entering Roderick's lodging (not the modest rooms on the Ripetta which he had first occupied, but a much more sumptuous apartment on the Corso) Rowland found a letter on the table addressed to himself. It was from Roderick, and consisted of but three lines. "I am gone to Frascati—for meditation. If I am not at home on Friday you had better join me." On Friday he was still absent, and Rowland went out to Frascati. Here he found his friend living at the inn and spending his days, according to his own account, lying under the trees of the Villa Mondragone and reading Ariosto. He was in a sombre mood; "meditation" seemed not to have been fruitful. Nothing especially pertinent to our narrative had passed between the two young men since Mrs. Light's ball save a few words bearing on an incident of that entertainment. Rowland informed Roderick the next day that he had told Miss Light of his engagement.

"I don't know whether you will thank me," he had said, "but it is my duty to let you know it. Miss Light perhaps has already done so."

Roderick looked at him a moment intently, with his colour slowly rising. "Why should I not thank you?" he asked. "I am not ashamed of my engagement."

"As you had not spoken of it yourself, I thought you might have a reason for not having it known."

"A man doesn't gossip about such a matter with strangers," Roderick rejoined, with the ring of irritation in his voice.

"With strangers—no!" said Rowland, smiling.

Roderick continued his work; but, after a moment, turning round with a frown—"If you supposed I had a reason for being silent, pray why should you have spoken?"

"I did not speak idly, my dear Roderick. I weighed the matter before I spoke, and promised myself to let you know immediately afterwards. It seemed to me that Miss Light had better know that your affections are pledged."

"The Cavaliere, then, has put it into your head that I am making love to her?"

"No; in that case I should not have spoken to her first."

"Do you mean, then, that she is making love to me?"

"This is what I mean," said Rowland, after a pause. "That girl finds you interesting, and she is pleased, even though she may feign indifference, at your finding her so. I said to myself that it might save her some sentimental disappointment to know without delay that you are not at liberty to become indefinitely interested in other women."

"You seem to have taken the measure of my liberty with extraordinary minuteness!" cried Roderick.

"You must do me justice. I am the cause of your separation from Miss Garland, the cause of your being exposed to temptations which she hardly even suspects.

How could I ever meet her again," Rowland demanded, with much warmth of tone, "if at the end of it all she should be unhappy?"

"I had no idea that she had made such an impression on you! You are too zealous. I take it she didn't charge you to look after her interests."

"If anything happens to you I am accountable. You must understand that."

"That's a view of the situation I can't accept—in your own interest no less than in mine! It can only make us both very uncomfortable. I know all I owe you; I feel it; you know that! But I am not a small boy nor an amiable simpleton any longer, and whatever I do I do with my eyes open. When I do well the merit's my own; if I do ill the fault's my own! The idea that I make you nervous is ridiculous. Dedicate your nerves to some better cause, and believe that if Miss Garland and I have a quarrel we shall settle it between ourselves."

Rowland had found himself wondering shortly before whether possibly his brilliant young friend were without a conscience; now it dimly occurred to him that he was without a heart. Rowland, as we have already intimated, was a man with a moral passion, and no small part of it had gone forth into this adventure. There had been from the first no protestations of friendship on either side, but Rowland had implicitly offered everything that belongs to friendship, and Roderick had apparently as deliberately accepted it. Rowland indeed had taken an exquisite satisfaction in his companion's easy inexpressive assent to his interest in him. "Here is an uncommonly fine thing," he said to himself; "a nature unconsciously grateful, a man in whom friendship does the thing that love alone generally has the credit of—knocks the bottom out of pride!" His reflective judgment of Roderick, as time went on, had indulged in a great many irrepressible vagaries; but his affection, his sense

of something in his companion's whole personality that appealed to his tenderness and charmed his imagination, had never for an instant faltered. He listened to Roderick's last words, and then he smiled as he rarely smiled—with bitterness.

"I don't at all like your telling me I am too zealous," he said. "If I had not been zealous I should never have cared a fig for you!"

Roderick flushed deeply and thrust his modelling tool up to the handle into the clay. "Say it outright! You have been a great fool to believe in me."

"I don't desire to say it, and you don't honestly believe I do!" said Rowland. "It seems to me I am really very good-natured even to reply to such nonsense."

Roderick sat down, crossed his arms, and fixed his eyes on the floor. Rowland looked at him for some moments; it seemed to him that he had never so clearly perceived his strangely commingled character—his strength and his weakness, his picturesque personal attractiveness and his urgent egotism, his exalted ardour and his puerile petulance. It would have made him almost sick, however, to think that, on the whole, Roderick was not a generous fellow, and he was so far from having ceased to believe in him that he felt just now more than ever that all this was but the painful complexity of genius. Rowland, who had not a grain of genius either to make one say he was an interested reasoner or to enable one to feel that he could afford a dangerous theory or two, adhered to his conviction of the essential salubrity of genius. Suddenly he felt an irresistible pity for his companion; it seemed to him that his beautiful faculty of production was a double-edged instrument, susceptible of being dealt in back-handed blows at its possessor. Genius was priceless, inspired, divine; but it was also at its hours capricious, sinister, cruel; and men of genius accordingly were alternately very enviable and very help-

less. It was not the first time he had had a sense of Roderick's standing passive in the clutch of his temperament. It had shaken him as yet but with a half good-humoured wantonness; but henceforth possibly it meant to handle him more roughly. These were not times, therefore, for a friend to have a short patience.

"When you err you say the fault's your own," he said at last. "It is because your faults are your own that I heed them."

Rowland's voice, when he spoke with feeling, had an extraordinary amenity. Roderick sat staring a moment longer at the floor, then he sprang up and laid his hand affectionately on his friend's shoulder. "You are the best man in the world," he said, "and I am a vile brute. Only," he added, in a moment, "*you don't understand me!*" And he looked at him with eyes of such pure expressiveness that one might have said (and Rowland did almost say so himself) that it was the fault of one's own grossness if one failed to read to the bottom of that beautiful soul.

Rowland smiled sadly. "What is it now? Explain."

"Oh, I can't explain!" cried Roderick, impatiently, returning to his work. "I have only one way of expressing my deepest feelings—it's this." And he swung his tool. He stood looking at the half-wrought clay for a moment, and then flung the instrument down. "And even this half the time plays me false!"

Rowland felt that his irritation had not subsided, and he himself had no taste for saying disagreeable things. Nevertheless he saw no sufficient reason to forbear uttering the words he had had on his conscience from the beginning. "We must do what we can and be thankful," he said. "And let me assure you of this—that it won't help you to become entangled with Miss Light."

Roderick pressed his hand to his forehead with vehemence, and then shook it in the air despairingly; a

gesture that had become frequent with him since he came to Italy. "No, no, it's no use; you don't understand me! But I don't blame you. You can't!"

"You think it *will* help you, then?" said Rowland, wondering.

"I think that when you expect a man to produce beautiful and wonderful works of art you ought to allow him a certain freedom of action, you ought to give him a long rope, you ought to let him follow his fancy and look for his material wherever he thinks he may find it! A mother can't nurse her child unless she follows a certain diet; an artist can't bring his visions to maturity unless he has a certain experience. You demand of us to be imaginative, and you deny us the things that feed the imagination. In labour we must be as passionate as the inspired sibyl; in life we must be mere machines. It won't do! When you have got an artist to deal with, you must take him as he is, good and bad together. I don't say they are pleasant fellows to know, or easy fellows to live with; I don't say they satisfy themselves any better than other people. I only say that if you want them to produce you must let them conceive. If you want a bird to sing, you must not cover up its cage. Shoot them, the poor devils, drown them, exterminate them, if you will, in the interest of public morality; it may be morality would gain—I daresay it would! But if you suffer them to live, let them live on their own terms and according to their own inexorable needs!"

Rowland burst out laughing. "I have no wish whatever either to shoot you or to drown you!" he said. "Why defend yourself with such very big guns against a warning offered you altogether in the interest of your freest development? Do you really mean that you have an inexorable need of embarking on a flirtation with Miss Light?—a flirtation as to the felicity of which there may be differences of opinion, but which cannot at best,

under the circumstances, be called innocent. Your last summer's adventures were more so! As for the terms on which you are to live, I had an idea you had arranged them otherwise!"

"I have arranged nothing—thank God! I don't pretend to arrange. I am young and ardent and inquisitive, and I am preoccupied with that girl. That's enough. I shall go as far as the fancy leads me. I am not afraid. Your genuine artist may be sometimes half a madman, but he's not a coward!"

"I see; it's a speculation. But suppose that in your speculation you should come to grief artistically as well as sentimentally?"

"Come what come will! If I'm to fizzle out, the sooner I know it the better. Sometimes I half suspect it. But let me at least go out and reconnoitre for the enemy, and not sit here waiting for him, cudgelling my brains for ideas that won't come!"

Do what he would, Rowland could not think of Roderick's theory of unlimited experimentation, especially as applied in the case under discussion, as anything but a pernicious illusion. But he saw it was vain to discuss the matter, for inclination was powerfully on Roderick's side. He laid his hand on the young man's shoulder, looked at him a moment with troubled eyes, then shook his head mournfully and turned away.

"I can't work any more," said Roderick. "You have upset me! I'll go and stroll on the Pincian." And he tossed aside his working jacket and prepared himself for the street. As he was arranging his cravat before the glass something occurred to him which made him thoughtful. He stopped a few moments afterwards as they were going out, with his hand on the door-knob. "You did from your own point of view an indiscreet thing," he said, "to tell Miss Light of my engagement."

Rowland looked at him with a glance which was partly an interrogation, but partly also an admission.

"If she's the coquette you say," Roderick added, "you have given her a reason the more!"

"And that's the girl you propose to devote yourself to?" cried Rowland.

"Oh, I don't say it, mind! I only say that she's the most interesting creature in the world! The next time you mean to render me a service, pray give me notice beforehand!"

It was perfectly characteristic of Roderick that a fortnight later he should have let his friend know that he depended upon him for society at Frascati as freely as if no irritating topic had ever been discussed between them. Rowland thought him generous, and he had at any rate a liberal faculty of forgetting that he had given you any reason to be displeased with him. It was equally characteristic of Rowland that he complied with his friend's summons without a moment's hesitation. His cousin Cecilia had once told him that he was the dupe of his perverse benevolence. She put the case with too little favour, or too much, as the reader chooses; it is certain at least that he had a constitutional tendency to magnanimous interpretations. Nothing happened, however, to suggest to him that he was deluded in thinking that Roderick's secondary impulses were wiser than his primary ones, and that the rounded total of his nature had a harmony perfectly attuned to the most amiable of its brilliant parts. Roderick's humour, for the time, was pitched in a minor key; he was lazy, listless, and melancholy, but he had never been so softly submissive. Winter had begun by the calendar, but the weather was divinely mild, and the two young men took long slow strolls on the hills, and lounged away the mornings in the villas. The villas at Frascati are delicious places, and replete with romantic suggestiveness. Roderick, as he had said, was meditating, and if a masterpiece was to come of his meditations Rowland was perfectly willing to bear him company and coax it along. But Roderick let him know

from the first that he was in a miserably sterile mood, and, cudgel his brains as he would, could think of nothing that would serve for the statue he was to make for Mr. Leavenworth.

"It is worse out here than in Rome," he said, "for here I am face to face with the dead blank of my mind! There I couldn't think of anything either, but there I found things to make me forget that I needed to think!" This was as frank an allusion to Christina Light as could have been expected under the circumstances; it seemed, indeed, to Rowland surprisingly frank—a pregnant example of his companion's strangely irresponsible way of looking at harmful facts. Roderick was silent sometimes for hours, with a puzzled look on his face and a constant fold between his even eyebrows; at other times he talked unceasingly, with a sort of impartial contemplative drawl. Rowland was half a dozen times on the point of asking him what was the matter with him; he was afraid he was going to be ill. Roderick had taken a great fancy to the Villa Mondragone, and used to declaim fantastic compliments to it as they strolled in the winter sunshine on the great terrace which looks towards Tivoli and the iridescent Sabine mountains. He carried his volume of Ariosto in his pocket, and took it out every now and then to spout half a dozen stanzas to his companion. He was, as a general thing, very little of a reader; but at intervals he would take a fancy to one of the classics and peruse it for a month in disjointed scraps. He had picked up Italian without study, and had a wonderfully proper accent, though in reading aloud he ruined the sense of half the lines he rolled off so sonorously. Rowland, who pronounced badly but understood everything, once said to him that Ariosto was not the poet for a man of his craft; a sculptor should make a companion of Dante. So he lent him the *Inferno*, which he had brought with him, and advised him to look into it. Roderick took it with some eagerness; perhaps it would brighten his wits.

He returned it the next day with disgust; he had found it intolerably depressing.

"A sculptor should model as Dante writes—you are right there," he said. "But when his genius is in eclipse Dante is a dreadfully smoky lamp. By what perversity of fate," he went on, "has it come about that I am a sculptor at all? A sculptor is such a confoundedly special genius; there are so few subjects he can treat, so few things in life that bear upon his work, so few moods in which he himself is inclined to it." (It may be noted that Rowland had heard him a dozen times affirm the flat reverse of all this.) "If I had only been a painter—a little, quiet, docile matter-of-fact painter like our friend Singleton—I should only have to open my Ariosto here to find a subject, to find colour and attitudes, stuffs and composition; I should only have to look up from the page at that mouldy old fountain against the blue sky, at that cypress alley wandering away like a procession of priests in couples, at the crags and hollows of the Sabine hills, to find my picture begun! Best of all would it be to be Ariosto himself or one of his brotherhood. Then everything in nature would give you a hint, and every form of beauty be part of your stock. You wouldn't have to look at things only to say—with tears of rage half the time—'Oh yes, it's wonderfully pretty, but what the devil can I do with it?' But a sculptor now! That's a pretty trade for a fellow who has got his living to make, and yet is so damnably constituted that he can't work to order, and considers that, æsthetically, clock ornaments don't pay! You can't model the serge-coated cypresses, nor those mouldering old Tritons, and all the sunny sadness of that dried-up fountain; you can't put the light into marble—the lovely, caressing, consenting, Italian light that you get so much of for nothing! Say that a dozen times in his life a man has a completely plastic vision—a vision in which the imagination recognises a subject and the subject reacts on the imagination. It is

a remunerative rate of work, and the intervals are comfortable!"

One morning as the two young men were lounging on the sun-warmed grass at the foot of one of the slanting pines of the Villa Mondragone, Roderick delivered himself of a tissue of lugubrious speculations as to the possible mischances of one's genius. "What if the watch should run down," he asked, "and you should lose the key? What if you should wake up some morning and find it stopped—inexorably, appallingly stopped? Such things have been, and the poor devils to whom they happened have had to grin and bear it. The whole matter of genius is a mystery. It bloweth where it listeth, and we know nothing of its mechanism. If it gets out of order we can't mend it; if it breaks down altogether we can't set it going again. We must let it choose its own pace and hold our breath lest it should lose its balance. It's dealt out in different doses, in big cups and little, and when you have consumed your portion it's as *naïf* to ask for more as it was for Oliver Twist to ask for more porridge. Lucky for you if you have got one of the big cups; we drink them down in the dark, and we can't tell their size until we tip them up and hear the last gurgle. Those of some men last for life; those of others for a couple of years. Come, what are you grinning at?" he went on. "Nothing is more common than for an artist who has set out on his journey on a high-stepping horse to find himself all of a sudden dismounted and invited to go his way on foot. You can number them by the thousand—the people of two or three successes; the poor fellows whose candle burnt out in a night. Some of them groped their way along without it, some of them gave themselves up for blind and sat down by the wayside to beg. Who shall say that I am not one of these? Who shall assure me that my credit is for an unlimited sum? Nothing proves it, and I never claimed it; or if I did, I did so in the

mere boyish joy of shaking off the dust of Northampton! If you believed so, my dear fellow, you did so at your own risk! What am I, what are the best of us, but an experiment? Do I succeed—do I fail? It doesn't depend on me! I am prepared for failure. It won't be a disappointment, simply because I sha'n't survive it. The end of my work shall be the end of my life. When I have played my last card I shall cease to care for the game. I am not making vulgar threats of suicide; for destiny, I trust, won't add insult to injury by putting me to that abominable trouble. But I have a conviction that if the hour strikes *here*," and he tapped his forehead, "I shall disappear, dissolve, be carried off in a cloud! For the past ten days I have had the vision of some such fate perpetually swimming before my eyes. My mind is like a dead calm in the tropics, and my imagination as motionless as the phantom ship in the 'Ancient Mariner'!"

Rowland listened to this fine monologue, as he often had occasion to listen to Roderick's flights of eloquence, with a number of mental restrictions. Both in gravity and in gaiety he said more than he meant, and you did him simple justice if you privately concluded that neither the glow of purpose nor the chill of despair was of so intense a character as his copiousness of illustration implied. The moods of an artist, his exultations and depressions, Rowland had often said to himself, were like the pen-flourishes a writing-master makes in the air when he begins to set his copy. He may bespatter you with ink, he may hit you in the eye, but he writes a magnificent hand. It was nevertheless true that at present poor Roderick gave unprecedented tokens of moral stagnation, and as for genius being held by the precarious tenure he had sketched, Rowland was at a loss to see where he could borrow the authority to contradict him. He sighed to himself, and wished that his companion had a trifle more of little Sam Singleton's

vulgar steadiness. But then, was Sam Singleton a man of genius? He answered that such reflections seemed to him unprofitable, not to say morbid; that the proof of the pudding was in the eating; that he did not know about bringing a dead genius back to life again, but that he was satisfied that vigorous effort was a cure for a great many ills that seemed far gone. "Don't bother about your mood," he said, "and don't believe there is any calm so dead that your own lungs can't ruffle it with a breeze. If you have work to do, don't wait to feel like it; set to work and you *will* feel like it."

"Set to work and produce abortions!" cried Roderick, with ire. "Preach that to others. Production with me must be either pleasure or nothing. As I said just now, I must either stay in the saddle or not go at all. I won't do second-rate work; I can't if I would. I have no cleverness apart from inspiration. I am not a Gloriani! You are right," he added, after a while; "this is unprofitable talk, and it makes my head ache. I shall take a nap and see if I can dream of a bright idea or two."

## XII.

He turned his face upward to the parasol of the great pine, closed his eyes, and in a short time forgot his sombre fancies. January though it was, the mild stillness seemed to vibrate with faint midsummer sounds. Rowland sat listening to them and wishing that, for the sake of their common comfort, Roderick's temper had been graced with a certain absent ductility. He was brilliant, but was he, like many brilliant things, brittle? Suddenly, to his musing sense, the soft atmospheric hum was overscored with distincter sounds. He heard voices beyond a mass of shrubbery, at the turn of a

neighbouring path. In a moment one of them began to seem familiar, and an instant later a large white poodle emerged into view. He was slowly followed by his mistress. Miss Light paused a moment on seeing Rowland and his companion; but though the former perceived that he was recognised she gave no greeting. Presently she walked directly towards him. He rose, and was on the point of waking Roderick, but she laid her finger on her lips and motioned him to forbear. She stood a moment looking at Roderick's handsome slumber.

"What delicious oblivion!" she said. "Happy man! Stenterello"—and she pointed to his face—"wake him up!"

The poodle extended a long pink tongue and began to lick Roderick's cheek.

"Why," asked Rowland, "if he is happy?"

"Oh, I want companions in misery! Besides, I want to show off my dog." Roderick roused himself, sat up and stared. By this time Mrs. Light had approached, walking with a gentleman on each side of her. One of these was the Cavaliere Giacosa; the other was Prince Casamassima. "I should have liked to lie down on the grass and go to sleep," Christina added. "But it would have been unheard of."

"Oh, not quite," said the Prince, in English, in a tone of great precision. "There was already a Sleeping Beauty in the Wood!"

"Charming!" cried Mrs. Light. "Do you hear that, my dear?"

"When the Prince says a brilliant thing it would be a pity to lose it," said the young girl. "Your servant, sir!" And she smiled at him with a grace that might have reassured him if he had thought her compliment ambiguous.

Roderick meanwhile had risen to his feet, and Mrs. Light began to exclaim on the oddity of their meeting,

and to explain that the day was so lovely that she had been charmed with the idea of spending it in the country. And who would ever have thought of finding Mr. Mallet and Mr. Hudson sleeping under a tree?

"Oh, I beg your pardon; I was not sleeping," said Rowland.

"Don't you know that Mr. Mallet is Mr. Hudson's sheep-dog?" asked Christina. "He was mounting guard to keep away the wolves."

"To indifferent purpose, madam!" said Rowland, indicating the young girl.

"Is that the way you spend your time?" Christina demanded of Roderick. "I never yet happened to learn what men were doing when they supposed women were not watching them, but it was something vastly below their reputation."

"When, pray," said Roderick, smoothing his ruffled locks, "are women not watching them?"

"We shall give you something better to do at any rate. How long have you been here? It's an age since I have seen you. We consider you an old inhabitant, and expect you to play host and entertain us."

Roderick said that he could offer them nothing but to show them the great terrace and its view; and ten minutes later the little group was assembled there. Mrs. Light was extravagant in her satisfaction; Christina looked away at the Sabine mountains in silence. The Prince stood by, frowning at the raptures of the elder lady.

"This is nothing," he said at last. "My word of honour. Have you seen the terrace at San Gaetano?"

"Ah, that terrace," murmured Mrs. Light, amorously. "I suppose it is magnificent!"

"It is four hundred feet long, and paved with marble. And the view is a thousand times more beautiful than this. You see far away the blue, blue sea, and the little smoke of Vesuvio!"

"Christina, love," cried Mrs. Light forthwith, "the Prince has a terrace four hundred feet long, all paved with marble!"

The Cavaliere gave a little cough and began to wipe his eye-glass.

"Stupendous!" said Christina. "To go from one end to the other the Prince must have out his golden carriage." This was apparently an allusion to one of the other items of the young man's grandeur.

"You always laugh at me," said the Prince. "I know no more what to say!"

She looked at him with a sad smile and shook her head. "No, no, dear Prince, I don't laugh at you. Heaven forbid! You are much too serious an affair. I assure you I feel your importance. What did you inform us was the value of the hereditary diamonds of the Princess Casamassima?"

"Ah, you are laughing at me yet!" said the poor young man, standing rigid and pale.

"It does not matter," Christina went on. "We have a note of it; mamma writes all those things down in a little book!"

"If you are laughed at, dear Prince, at least it's in company," said Mrs. Light, caressingly; and she took his arm, as if to combat his possible displacement under the shock of her daughter's sarcasm. But the Prince looked heavy-eyed at Rowland and Roderick, to whom the young girl was turning, as if he had much rather his lot were cast with theirs.

"Is the villa inhabited?" Christina asked, pointing to the vast melancholy structure which rises above the terrace.

"Not privately," said Roderick. "It is occupied by a Jesuits' college for little boys."

"Can women go in?"

"I am afraid not." And Roderick began to laugh. "Fancy the poor little devils looking up from their Latin

declensions and seeing Miss Light shining down on them!"

"I should like to see the poor little devils, with their rosy cheeks, and their long black gowns, and when they were pretty I shouldn't scruple to kiss them. But if I can't have that amusement I must have some other. We must not stand planted on this enchanting terrace as if we were stakes driven into the earth. We must dance, we must feast, we must do something picturesque. Mamma has arranged, I believe, that we are to go back to Frascati to lunch at the inn. I decree that we lunch here and send the Cavaliere to the inn to get the provisions! He can take the carriage, which is waiting below."

Miss Light carried out this programme with unfaltering ardour. The Cavaliere was summoned, and he stood to receive her commands hat in hand, with his eyes cast down, as if she had been a princess addressing her major-domo. She, however, laid her hand with friendly grace upon his button-hole, and called him a dear good old Cavaliere for being always so obliging. Her spirits had risen with the occasion, and she talked irresistible nonsense. "Bring the best they have," she said, "no matter if it ruins us! And if the best is very bad it will be all the more amusing. I shall enjoy seeing Mr. Mallet try to swallow it for propriety's sake! Mr. Hudson will say out like a man that it's horrible stuff and that he'll be choked first! Be sure you bring a dish of macaroni; the Prince must have the diet of the Neapolitan nobility. But I leave all that to you, my poor dear Cavaliere; you know what's good! Only be sure, above all, you bring a guitar. Mr. Mallet will play us a tune, I will dance with Mr. Hudson, and mamma will pair off with the Prince, of whom she is so fond!"

And as she concluded her recommendations she patted her discreet old servitor tenderly on the shoulder. He looked askance at Rowland; his little black eye glittered;

it seemed to say, "Didn't I tell you she was a good girl?"

The Cavaliere returned with zealous speed, accompanied by one of the servants of the inn, laden with a basket containing the materials of a rustic luncheon. The porter of the villa was easily induced to furnish a table and half a dozen chairs, and the repast when set forth was pronounced a perfect success; not so good as to fail of the proper picturesqueness, nor yet so bad as to defeat the proper function of repasts. Christina continued to display the most charming animation, and compelled Rowland to reflect privately that, think what one might of her, the harmonious gaiety of a beautiful girl was the most delightful sight in nature. Her good-humour was contagious. Roderick, who an hour before had been descanting on madness and suicide, commingled his laughter with her lightest sallies; Prince Casamassima stroked his young moustache and found a fine cool smile for everything; his neighbour, Mrs. Light, who had Rowland on the other side, made the friendliest confidences to each of the young men, and the Cavaliere contributed to the general hilarity by the solemnity of his attention to his plate. As for Rowland, the spirit of kindly mirth prompted him to propose the health of this useful old gentleman. A moment later he wished he had held his tongue, for although the toast was drunk with demonstrative goodwill, the Cavaliere received it with various small signs of eager self-effacement which suggested to Rowland that his diminished gentility but half relished honours which had a flavour of patronage. To perform punctiliously his mysterious duties towards the two ladies, and to elude or to baffle observation on his own merits—this seemed the Cavaliere's modest programme. Rowland perceived that Mrs. Light, who was not always remarkable for tact, seemed to have divined his humour on this point. She touched her lips with her glass, but she said nothing gracious, and she immediately gave another direc-

tion to the conversation. The old man had brought no guitar, so that when the feast was over there was nothing to hold the little group together. Christina wandered away with Roderick to another part of the terrace; the Prince, whose smile had vanished, sat gnawing the head of his cane, near Mrs. Light, and Rowland strolled apart with the Cavaliere, to whom he wished to address a friendly word in compensation for the discomfort he had inflicted on his modesty. The Cavaliere was a mine of information upon all Roman places and people; he told Rowland a number of curious anecdotes about the old Villa Mondragone. "If history could always be taught in this fashion!" thought Rowland. "It's the ideal—strolling up and down on the very spot commemorated, hearing out-of-the-way anecdotes from deeply indigenous lips." At last, as they passed, Rowland observed the mournful physiognomy of Prince Casamassima, and glancing towards the other end of the terrace saw that Roderick and Christina had disappeared from view. The young man was sitting upright in an attitude, apparently habitual, of ceremonious rigidity; but his lower jaw had fallen and was propped up with his cane, and his dull dark eye was fixed upon the angle of the villa which had just eclipsed Miss Light and her companion. His features were grotesque, and his expression was vacuous; but there was a lurking delicacy in his face which seemed to tell you that nature had been making Casamassimas for a great many centuries, and, though she adapted her mould to circumstances, had learned to mix her material to an extraordinary fineness, and to perform the whole operation with extreme smoothness. The Prince was stupid, Rowland suspected, but he imagined he was amiable, and he saw that at any rate he had the great quality of regarding himself in a thoroughly serious light. Rowland touched his companion's arm and pointed to the melancholy nobleman.

"Why in the world does he not go after her and insist on being noticed?" he asked.

"Oh, he's very proud!" said the Cavaliere.

"That's all very well, but a gentleman who cultivates a passion for that young lady must be prepared to make sacrifices."

"He thinks he has already made a great many. He comes of a very great family—a race of princes who for six hundred years have married none but the daughters of princes. But he is seriously in love, and he would marry her to-morrow."

"And she will not have him?"

"Ah, she is very proud too!" The Cavaliere was silent a moment, as if he were measuring the propriety of frankness. He seemed to have formed a high opinion of Rowland's discretion, for he presently continued—"It would be a great match, for she brings him neither a name nor a fortune—nothing but her beauty. But the signorina will receive no favours; I know her well! She would rather have her beauty blasted than seem to care about the marriage, and if she ever accepts the Prince it will be only after he has implored her on his knees!"

"But she does care about it," said Rowland, "and to bring him to his knees she is working upon his jealousy by pretending to be interested in my friend Hudson. If you said more you would say that, eh?"

The Cavaliere's shrewdness exchanged a glance with Rowland's. "By no means. Christina is a singular girl; she has many romantic ideas. She would be quite capable of interesting herself seriously in a remarkable young man like your friend, and doing her utmost to discourage a splendid suitor like the Prince. She would act sincerely, and she would go very far. But it would be unfortunate for the remarkable young man," he added, after a pause, "for at the last she would go back!"

"A singular girl indeed!"

"She would accept the more brilliant *parti*. I can answer for it."

"And what would be her motive?"

"She would be forced. There would be circumstances . . . I can't tell you more."

"But this implies that the rejected suitor would come back to her. He might grow tired of waiting."

"Oh, this one is good! Look at him now." Rowland looked, and saw that the Prince had left his place by Mrs. Light, and was marching restlessly to and fro between the villa and the parapet of the terrace. Every now and then he looked at his watch. "In this country, you know," said the Cavaliere, "a young lady never goes walking alone with a handsome young man. It seems to him very strange."

"It must seem to him monstrous, and if he overlooks it he must be very much in love."

"Oh, he will overlook it. He is far gone."

"Who is this exemplary lover, then; what is he?"

"A Neapolitan; one of the oldest houses in Italy. He is a prince in your English sense of the word, for he has a princely fortune. He is very young; he is only just of age; he saw the signorina last winter in Naples. He fell in love with her from the first, but his family interfered, and an old uncle, an ecclesiastic, Monsignor B——, hurried up to Naples, seized him and locked him up. Meantime he has passed his majority, and he can dispose of himself. His relations are moving heaven and earth to prevent his marrying Miss Light, and they have sent us word that he forfeits his property if he takes his wife out of a certain line. I have investigated the question, and I find this is but a fiction to frighten us. He is perfectly free; but the estates are such, that it is no wonder they wish to keep them in their own hands. For Italy, it is an extraordinary case of unencumbered property. The Prince has been an orphan from his third year; he has therefore had a long minority, and made no inroads upon his fortune. Besides, he is very prudent and orderly; I am only afraid that some day he

will pull the purse-strings too tight. All these years his affairs have been in the hands of Monsignor B——, who has managed them to perfection—paid off mortgages, planted forests, opened up mines. It is now a magnificent fortune; such a fortune as with his name would justify the young man in pretending to any alliance whatsoever. And he lays it all at the feet of that young girl who is wandering in yonder *boschetto* with a penniless artist."

"He is certainly a phœnix of princes! The signora must be in a state of bliss."

The Cavaliere looked imperturbably grave. "The signora has a high esteem for his character."

"His character, by the way," rejoined Rowland, with a smile; "what sort of a character is it?"

"Eh, Prince Casamassima is a veritable prince! He is a very good young man. He is not brilliant nor witty, but he will not let himself be made a fool of. He is a faithful son of the Church—though he does propose to marry a Protestant. He will handle that point after marriage. He's as you see him there: a young man without many ideas, but with a very firm grasp of a single one—the conviction that Prince Casamassima is a very great person, that he greatly honours any young lady by asking for her hand, and that things are going very strangely when the young lady turns her back upon him. The poor young man is terribly puzzled. But I whisper to him every day, 'Pazienza, Signor Principe!'"

"So you firmly believe," said Rowland, in conclusion, "that Miss Light will accept him just in time not to lose him?"

"I count upon it. She would make too perfect a princess to miss her destiny."

"And you hold that nevertheless in the meanwhile in listening to, say, my friend Hudson, she will have been acting in good faith?"

The Cavaliere lifted his shoulders a trifle, and gave an

inscrutable smile. "Eh, dear signore, the Christina is very romantic!"

"So much so, you intimate, that she will eventually pivot round in consequence not of a change of sentiment, but of a mysterious outward pressure?"

"If everything else fails, there is that resource. But it is mysterious, as you say, and you needn't try to guess it. You will never know."

"The poor signorina, then, will suffer!"

"Not too much, I hope."

"And the remarkable young man? You maintain that there is nothing but disappointment in store for the infatuated youth who loses his heart to her."

The Cavaliere hesitated. "He had better," he said in a moment, "go and pursue his studies in Florence. There are very fine antiques in the Uffizi!"

Rowland presently joined Mrs. Light, to whom her restless *protégé* had not yet returned. "That's right," she said; "sit down here; I have something serious to say to you. I am going to talk to you as a friend. I want your assistance. In fact, you *must* help me; it's your duty. Look at that unhappy young man."

"Yes," said Rowland, "he seems unhappy."

"He is just come of age, he bears one of the greatest names in Italy, and owns one of the greatest properties, and he is pining away with love for my daughter."

"So the Cavaliere tells me."

"The Cavaliere shouldn't gossip," said Mrs. Light, drily. "Such information should come from me. The Prince is pining, as I say; he's consumed, he's devoured. It's a real Italian passion; I know what that means!" And the lady gave a speaking glance, which seemed to coquet for a moment with retrospect. "Meanwhile, if you please, my daughter is hiding in the woods with your dear friend Mr. Hudson. I could cry with rage!"

"If things are as bad as that," said Rowland, "it seems to me that you should find nothing easier than

to despatch the Cavaliere to bring the guilty couple back."

"Never in the world! My hands are tied. Do you know what Christina would do? She would tell the Cavaliere to go about his business—Heaven forgive her!—and send me word that if she had a mind to she would walk in the woods till midnight. Fancy the Cavaliere coming back and delivering such a message as that before the Prince! Think of a girl wantonly making light of such a chance as hers! He would marry her to-morrow at six o'clock in the morning."

"It is certainly very sad," said Rowland.

"That costs you little to say! If you had left your precious young meddler to vegetate in his native village you would have saved me a world of bother!"

"Ah, you marched into the jaws of danger," said Rowland. "You came and knocked at poor Hudson's door."

"In an evil hour! I wish to Heaven you would talk with him."

"I have done my best."

"I wish, then, you would take him away. You have plenty of money. Do me a favour. Take him to travel. Go to the East—go to Timbuctoo. Then, when Christina is Princess Casamassima," Mrs. Light added in a moment, "he may come back if he chooses!"

"Does she really care for him?" Rowland asked, abruptly.

"She thinks she does, possibly. She is a living riddle. She must needs follow out every idea that comes into her head. Fortunately most of them don't last long; but this one may last long enough to give the Prince a fit of disgust. If that were to happen, I don't know what I should do! I should be the most miserable of women. It would be too cruel, after all I have suffered to make her what she is, to see the labour of years blighted by a caprice. For I can assure you, sir," Mrs. Light went

on, "that if my daughter is the greatest beauty in the world some of the credit is mine."

Rowland promptly remarked that this was obvious. He saw that the lady's irritated nerves demanded comfort from flattering reminiscence, and he assumed designedly the attitude of a zealous auditor. She began to tell the story of her efforts, her hopes, her dreams, her presentiments, her disappointments, in this exalted cause of catching a great husband for her daughter. It was a wonderful rigmarole of strange confidences, and while it went on the Prince continued to pass to and fro, stiffly and solemnly, like a pendulum marking the time allowed for the young lady to come to her senses. Mrs. Light evidently at an early period had gathered her maternal hopes into a sacred parcel, to which she said her prayers and burnt incense—which she treated generally as a sort of fetish. These things had been her religion; she had none other, and she performed her devotions bravely and cheerily, in the light of day. The poor old fetish had been so caressed and manipulated, so thrust in and out of its niche, so passed from hand to hand, so dressed and undressed, so mumbled and fumbled over, that it had lost by this time much of its early freshness, and seemed a rather battered and disfeatured divinity. But it was still brought forth in moments of trouble, to have its tinselled petticoat twisted about and be set up on its altar. Rowland observed that Mrs. Light had a real maternal conscience; she considered that she had been performing a pious duty in bringing up Christina to set her cap for a prince; and when the future looked dark she found consolation in thinking that destiny could never have the heart to deal a blow at so deserving a person. This conscience upside down presented to Rowland's fancy a sort of physical image; he was on the point half a dozen times of laughing out.

"I don't know whether you believe in presentiments," said Mrs. Light, "and I don't care! I have had one

for the last fifteen years. People have laughed at it, but they have not laughed me out of it. It has been everything to me; I couldn't have lived without it. One must believe in something! It came to me in a flash, when Christina was five years old. I remember the day and the place, as if it were yesterday. She was a very ugly baby; for the first two years I could hardly bear to look at her, and I used to spoil my own looks with crying about her. She had an Italian nurse who was very fond of her, and insisted that she would grow up pretty. I couldn't believe her, I used to contradict her, and we were for ever squabbling. I was just a little silly in those days—surely I may say it now—and I was very fond of being amused. If my daughter was ugly, it was not that she resembled her mamma; I had no lack of amusement. People accused me, I believe, of neglecting my little girl; if I ever did, I have made up for it since. One day I went to drive on the Pincio—I was in very low spirits. A certain person—I needn't name him—had trifled with my generous confidence. While I was there he passed me in a carriage, driving with a horrible woman who had made trouble between us. I got out of my carriage to walk about, and at last sat down on a bench. I can show you the spot at this hour. While I sat there a child came wandering along the path—a little girl of four or five, very fantastically dressed, in all the colours of the rainbow. She stopped in front of me and stared at me, and I stared at her queer little dress, which was a cheap imitation of the costume of one of these *contadine.* At last I looked up at her face and said to myself, 'Bless me, what a beautiful child! what a splendid pair of eyes, what a magnificent head of hair! If my poor little Christina were only like that!' The child turned away slowly, but looking back with its eyes fixed on me. All of a sudden I gave a cry, pounced on it, pressed it in my arms, covered it with kisses. It *was* Christina, my own precious child,

so disguised by the ridiculous dress which the nurse had amused herself in making for her that her own mother had not recognised her! She knew me, but she said afterwards that she had not spoken to me because I looked so angry. Of course, my face was sad! I rushed with my child to the carriage, drove home post haste, pulled off her rags, and, as I may say, wrapped her up in cotton. I had been blind, I had been insane; she was a creature in ten millions, she was to be a beauty of beauties, a priceless treasure! Every day after that the certainty grew. From that time I lived only for my daughter. I watched her, I fondled her from morning till night, I worshipped her. I went to see doctors about her. I took every sort of advice. I was determined she should be perfection. The things that have been done for that girl, sir—you wouldn't believe them; they would make you smile! Nothing was spared; if I had been told that she must have a bath every morning of molten pearls, I would have found means to give it to her. She never raised a finger for herself, she breathed nothing but perfumes, she walked upon velvet. She never was out of my sight, and from that day to this I have never said a sharp word to her. By the time she was ten years old she was beautiful as an angel, and so noticed, wherever we went, that I had to make her wear a veil like a woman of twenty. Her hair reached down to her feet; her hands were the hands of an empress. Then I saw that she was as clever as she was beautiful, and that she had only to play her cards. She had masters, professors, every educational advantage. They told me she was a little prodigy. She speaks French, Italian, German, better than most natives. She has a wonderful genius for music, and might make her fortune as a pianist if it were not made for her otherwise! I travelled all over Europe, every one told me she was a marvel. The director of the opera in Paris saw her dance at a child's party at Spa, and offered me an

enormous sum if I would give her up to him and let him have her educated for the ballet. I said, 'No, I thank you, sir; she is meant to be something finer than a *princesse de théâtre*.' I had a passionate belief that she might marry absolutely whom she chose, that she might be a princess out and out. I have never given it up, and I can assure you that it has sustained me in many embarrassments. Financial, some of them; I don't mind confessing it! I have raised money on that girl's face! I have taken her to the Jews and bidden her put up her veil, and asked if the mother of that young lady was not safe! She, of course, was too young to understand me. And yet, as a child, you would have said she knew what was in store for her; before she could read she had the manners, the tastes, the instincts of a little aristocrat. She would have nothing to do with shabby things or shabby people; if she stained one of her frocks she was seized with a kind of frenzy—she would tear it to pieces. At Nice, at Baden, at Brighton, wherever we stayed, she used to be sent for by all the great people to play with their children. She has played at kissing-games with people who now stand on the steps of thrones! I have gone so far as to think at times that those childish kisses were a sign—a symbol—a pledge! You may laugh at me if you like, but haven't such things happened again and again without half so good a cause, and doesn't history notoriously repeat itself? There was a little Spanish girl at a second-rate English boarding-school thirty years ago! . . . The Empress, certainly, is a pretty woman; but what is my Christina, pray? I have dreamt of it sometimes, every night for a month. I won't tell you I have been to consult those old women who advertise in the newspapers; you'll call me an old imbecile. Imbecile, if you please! I have refused magnificent offers because I believed that somehow or other—if wars and revolutions were needed to bring it about—we should have nothing less than *that*.

There might be another *coup d'état* somewhere, and another brilliant young sovereign looking out for a wife! At last, however," Mrs. Light proceeded with incomparable gravity, "since the overturning of the poor king of Naples and that charming queen, and the expulsion of all those dear little old-fashioned Italian grand-dukes, and the dreadful radical talk that is going on all over the world, it has come to seem to me that with Christina in such a position I should be really very nervous. Even in such a position she would hold her head very high, and if anything should happen to her she would make no concessions to the popular fury. The best thing, if one would be prudent, seems to be a nobleman of the highest possible rank short of belonging to a reigning stock. There you see one striding up and down looking at his watch and counting the minutes till my daughter reappears!"

Rowland listened to all this with a large compassion for the heroine of the tale. What an education, what a history, what a school of character and of morals! He looked at the Prince and wondered whether he too had heard Mrs. Light's story. If he had he was a brave man. "I certainly hope you will nail him," he said to Mrs. Light. "You have played a dangerous game with your daughter; it would be a pity not to win! But there is hope for you yet; here she comes at last!"

Christina reappeared as he spoke these words, strolling beside her companion with the same indifferent tread with which she had departed. Rowland imagined that there was a faint pink flush in her cheek which she had not carried away with her, and there was certainly a light in Roderick's eyes which he had not seen there for a week.

"Bless my soul, how they are all looking at us!" she cried as they advanced. "One would think we were prisoners of the Inquisition!" And she paused and glanced from the Prince to her mother, and from Rowland to the Cavaliere, and then threw back her head and

burst into far-ringing laughter. "What is it, pray? Have I been very improper? Am I ruined for ever? Dear Prince, you are looking at me as if I had committed the unpardonable sin!"

"I myself," said the Prince, "would never have ventured to ask you to walk with me alone in the country for an hour!"

"The more fool you, dear Prince, as the vulgar say! Our walk has been charming. I hope you, on your side, have enjoyed each other's society."

"My dear daughter," said Mrs. Light, taking the arm of her predestined son-in-law, "I shall have something serious to say to you when we reach home. We will go back to the carriage."

"Something serious! Decidedly, it *is* the Inquisition. Mr. Hudson, stand firm, and let us agree to make no confessions without conferring previously with each other! They may put us on the rack first. Mr. Mallet I see also," Christina added, "has something serious to say to me!"

Rowland had been looking at her with the shadow of his lately-stirred pity in his eyes. "Possibly," he said. "But it must be for some other time."

"I am at your service. I see our good humour is gone. And I only wanted to be amiable! It is very discouraging. Cavaliere, you alone look as if you had a little of the milk of human kindness left; from your dear old stupid face, at least, there is no telling what you think. Give me your arm and take me away!"

The party took its course back to the carriage, which was waiting in the grounds of the villa, and Rowland and Roderick bade their friends farewell. Christina threw herself back in her seat and closed her eyes; a manœuvre for which Rowland imagined the Prince was grateful, as it enabled him to look at her without seeming to depart from his attitude of distinguished disapproval.

Rowland found himself aroused from sleep early the next morning to see Roderick standing before him, dressed for departure, with his bag in his hand. "I am off," he said. "I am back to work. I have an idea. I must strike while the iron is hot! Farewell!" And he departed by the first train. Rowland went alone by the next.

## XIII.

ROWLAND went very often to the Coliseum; he was never tired of inspecting this monument. One morning, about a month after his return from Frascati, as he was strolling across the vast arena, he observed a young woman seated on one of the fragments of stone which are ranged along the line of the ancient parapet. It seemed to him that he had seen her before, but he was unable to localise her face. Passing her again he perceived that one of the little red-legged French soldiers who were at that time on guard there had approached her and was gallantly making himself agreeable. She smiled brilliantly, and Rowland recognised the smile (it had always pleased him) of a certain comely Assunta who sometimes opened the door for Mrs. Light's visitors. He wondered what she was doing alone in the Coliseum, and conjectured that Assunta had admirers as well as her young mistress, but that being without the same domiciliary conveniences she was using this massive heritage of her Latin ancestors as a boudoir. In other words, she had an appointment with her lover, who would do well from present appearances to be punctual. It was a long time since Rowland had ascended to the ruinous upper tiers of the great circus, and as the day was radiant and the distant views promised to be particularly clear, he determined to give himself this pleasure. The cus-

todian unlocked the great wooden wicket, and he climbed through the winding shafts where the eager Roman crowds had billowed and trampled, not pausing till he reached the highest accessible point of the ruin. The views were as fine as he had supposed; the lights on the Sabine mountains had never been more lovely. He gazed to his satisfaction, and retraced his steps. In a moment he paused again on an abutment somewhat lower, from which the glance dropped dizzily into the interior. There are accidents of ruggedness in the upper portions of the Coliseum which offer a very fair imitation of the mighty excrescences in the face of an Alpine cliff. In those days a multitude of delicate flowers and sprays of wild herbage had found a friendly soil in the hoary crevices, and they bloomed and nodded amid the antique masonry as naturally as if it were the boulders of a mountain. Rowland was turning away when he heard a sound of voices rising up from below. He had but to step slightly forward to find himself overlooking two persons who had seated themselves on a narrow ledge in a sunny corner. They had apparently an eye to extreme privacy, but they had not observed that their position was commanded by the abutment on which Rowland stood. One of these airy adventurers was a lady, thickly veiled, so that even if he had not been placed directly above her Rowland could not have seen her face. The other was a young man whose face was also invisible, but who presently gave a toss of his clustering locks which was equivalent to a master's signature. A moment's reflection satisfied him of the identity of the lady. He had been unjust to poor Assunta, sitting patient in the gloomy arena; she had not come on her own errand. Rowland's discoveries made him hesitate. Should he retire as noiselessly as possible, or should he call out a friendly good morning? While he was debating the question he found himself hearing his friend's words. They were of such a nature as to make him unwilling to

retreat, and yet to make it awkward to be discovered in a position where it would be apparent that he had been an auditor.

"If what you say is true," said Christina, with her usual soft deliberateness—it made her words rise with peculiar distinctness to Rowland's ear—"you are simply weak. I am sorry! I hoped—I really believed—you were not."

"No, I am not weak," answered Roderick with vehemence; "I maintain that I am not weak! I am incomplete, perhaps; but I can't help that. Weakness is a man's own fault!"

"Incomplete then!" said Christina, with a laugh. "It's the same thing, so long as it keeps you from splendid achievement. Is it written, then, that I shall really never know what I have so often dreamed of?"

"What have you dreamed of?"

"A man whom I can perfectly respect," cried the young girl, with a sudden flame. "A man whom I can unrestrictedly admire! I meet one, as I have met more than one before, whom I fondly believe to be cast in a larger mould than most of the vulgar human breed—to be large in character, great in talent, strong in will! In such a man as that, I say, one's weary imagination at last may rest; or it may wander if it will, yet never need to wander far from the deeps where one's heart is anchored. When I first knew you I gave no sign, but you had struck me. I observed you as women observe, and I fancied you had the sacred fire."

"Before Heaven I believe I have!" cried Roderick.

"Ah, but so little! It flickers and trembles and sputters; it goes out, you tell me, for whole weeks together. From your own account it's highly probable that you are a failure."

"I say those things sometimes myself, but when I hear you say them they make me feel as if I could do all sorts of great things."

"Ah, the man who is strong with what I call strength," Christina replied, "would neither rise nor fall by anything I could say! I am a poor weak woman; I have no strength myself, and I can give no strength. I am a miserable medley of vanity and folly. I am silly, I am ignorant, I am affected, I am false. I am the fruit of a horrible education sown on a worthless soil. I am all that, and yet I believe I have one merit! I should know a great character when I saw it, and I should delight in it with a generosity which would do something towards the remission of my sins. For a man who should really give me a certain feeling—I have never had it, but I should know it when it came—I would send Prince Casamassima and his millions to perdition. I don't know what you think of me for saying all this; I suppose we have not climbed up here under the skies to play propriety. Why have you been at such pains to assure me, after all, that you are a little man and not a great one, a weak one and not a strong? I innocently imagined that your eyes declared you were strong. But your voice condemns you; I always wondered at it; it's not the voice of a conqueror!"

"Give me something to conquer," cried Roderick, "and when I say that I thank you from my soul, my voice, whatever you think of it, shall speak the truth!"

Christina for a moment said nothing. Rowland was too interested to think of moving. "You pretend to such devotion," she went on, "and yet I am sure you have never really chosen between me and that person in America."

"Do me the favour not to speak of her," said Roderick, imploringly.

"Why not? I say no ill of her, and I think all kinds of good. I am certain she is a far better girl than I, and far more likely to make you happy."

"This is happiness, this present palpable moment,"

said Roderick; "though you *have* such a genius for saying the things that torture me!"

"It's greater happiness than you deserve, then! You have never chosen, I say; you have been afraid to choose. You have never really looked in the face the fact that you are false, that you have broken your faith. You have never looked at it and seen that it was hideous, and yet said, 'No matter, I will brave the penalty, I will bear the shame!' You have closed your eyes; you have tried to stifle remembrance, to persuade yourself that you were not behaving so badly as you seemed to be, that there would be some way, after all, of doing what you liked and yet escaping trouble. You have faltered and drifted, you have gone on from accident to accident, and I am sure that at this present moment you can't tell what it is you really desire!"

Roderick was sitting with his knees drawn up and bent, and his hands clasped round his legs. He bent his head and rested his forehead on his knees.

Christina went on with a sort of infernal calmness. "I believe that really you don't greatly care for your friend in America any more than you do for me! You are one of the men who care only for themselves and for what they can make of themselves. That's very well when they can make something great, and I could interest myself in a man of extraordinary power who should wish to turn all his passions to account. But if the power should turn out to be, after all, rather ordinary? Fancy feeling one's self ground in the mill of a third-rate talent! If you have doubts about yourself I can't reassure you; I have too many doubts myself about everything in this weary world. You have gone up like a rocket in your profession, they tell me; are you going to come down like the stick? I don't pretend to know; I repeat frankly what I have said before—that all modern sculpture seems to me vulgar, and that the only things I care for are some of the most battered of the antiques of the

Vatican. No, no, I can't reassure you; and when you tell me—with a confidence in my discretion of which certainly I am duly sensible—that at times you feel terribly small, why, I can only answer, 'Ah then, my poor friend, I am afraid you are small!' The language I should like to hear, from a certain person, would be the language of absolute decision."

Roderick raised his head, but he said nothing; he seemed to be exchanging a long glance with his companion. The result of it was to make him fling himself back with an inarticulate murmur. Rowland, admonished by the silence, was on the point of turning away, but he was arrested by a gesture of the young girl. She pointed for a moment into the blue air. Roderick followed the direction of her gesture.

"Is that little flower we see outlined against that dark niche," she asked, "as intensely blue as it looks through my veil?" She spoke apparently with the amiable design of directing the conversation into a less painful channel.

Rowland, from where he stood, could see the flower she meant—a delicate plant of radiant hue, which sprouted from the top of an immense fragment of wall some twenty feet from Christina's place.

Roderick turned his head and looked at it without answering. At last glancing round, "Put up your veil!" he said. Christina complied. "Does it look as blue now?" he asked.

"Ah, what a lovely colour!" she murmured, leaning her head on one side.

"Should you like to have it?"

She stared a moment, and then broke into a loud laugh.

"Should you like to have it?" he repeated in a ringing voice.

"Don't look as if you would eat me up," she answered. "It's harmless if I say yes!"

Roderick rose to his feet and stood looking at the little

flower. It was separated from the ledge on which he stood by a rugged surface of vertical wall, which dropped straight into the dusky vaults behind the arena. Suddenly he took off his hat and flung it behind him. Christina then sprang to her feet.

"I will bring it to you," he said.

She seized his arm. "Are you crazy? Do you mean to kill yourself?"

"I shall not kill myself. Sit down!"

"Excuse me. Not till you do!" and she grasped his arm with both hands.

Roderick shook her off and pointed with a violent gesture to her former place. "Go there!" he cried, fiercely.

"You can never, never!" she murmured, beseechingly, clasping her hands. "I implore you!"

Roderick turned and looked at her, and then in a voice which Rowland had never heard him use, a voice almost thunderous, a voice which awakened the echoes of the mighty ruin, he repeated, "Sit down!" She hesitated a moment, and then she dropped on the ground and buried her face in her hands.

Rowland had seen all this, and he saw what followed. He saw Roderick clasp in his left arm the jagged corner of the vertical partition on which he proposed to try his experiment, then stretch out his leg and feel for a resting-place for his foot. Rowland had measured with a glance the possibility of his holding on, and pronounced it uncommonly small. The wall was garnished with a series of narrow projections, the remains apparently of a brick cornice supporting the arch of a vault which had long since collapsed. It was by lodging his toes on these loose brackets, and grasping with his hands at certain mouldering protuberances on a level with his head, that Roderick intended to proceed. The relics of the cornice were utterly worthless as a support. Rowland had observed this, and yet for a moment he had hesitated. If

the thing were possible he felt a sudden admiring glee at the thought of Roderick's doing it. It would be finely done, it would be gallant, it would have a sort of masculine eloquence as an answer to Christina's sinister *persiflage*. But it was not possible! Rowland left his place with a bound and scrambled down some neighbouring steps, and the next moment a stronger pair of hands than Christina's were laid upon Roderick's shoulder.

He turned, staring, pale and angry. Christina rose, pale and staring too, but beautiful in her wonder and alarm. "My dear Roderick," said Rowland, "I am only preventing you from doing a very foolish thing. That's an exploit for spiders, not for young sculptors of promise."

Roderick wiped his forehead, looked back at the wall, and then closed his eyes, as if with a spasm of retarded dizziness. "I won't resist you," he said. "But I have made you obey," he added, turning to Christina. "Am I weak now?"

She had recovered her composure; she looked straight past him and addressed Rowland. "Be so good as to show me the way out of this horrible place!"

He helped her back into the corridor; Roderick followed after a short interval. Of course, as they were decending the steps, came questions for Rowland to answer, and more or less surprise. Where had he come from? how happened he to have appeared at just that moment? Rowland answered that he had been rambling overhead, and that, looking out of an aperture, he had seen a gentleman preparing to undertake a preposterous gymnastic feat, and a lady swooning away in consequence. Interference seemed justifiable, and he had made it as prompt as possible. Roderick was far from hanging his head like a man who has been caught in the perpetration of an extravagant folly; but if he held it more erect than usual Rowland believed that this was much less because he had made a show of personal daring

than because he had triumphantly proved to Christina that, like a certain person she had dreamed of, he too could speak the language of decision. Christina descended to the arena in silence, apparently occupied with her own thoughts. She betrayed no sense of the privacy of her interview with Roderick needing an explanation; she seemed to imply that Rowland had seen stranger things in New York. The only evidence of her recent agitation was that on being joined by her maid she declared that she was unable to walk home—she must have a carriage. A fiacre was found resting in the shadow of the Arch of Constantine, and Rowland suspected that after she had got into it she disburdened herself under her veil of a few natural tears.

Rowland had played eavesdropper to so good a purpose that he might justly have omitted the ceremony of denouncing himself to Roderick. He preferred, however, to let him know that he had overheard a portion of his talk with Christina.

"Of course it seems to you," Roderick said, "a proof that I am thoroughly infatuated."

"Miss Light seemed to me to know very well how far she could go," Rowland answered. "She was twisting you round her finger. I don't think she exactly meant to defy you; but your preposterous attempt to pluck the flower was a proof that she could go all lengths in the way of making a fool of you."

"Yes," said Roderick, meditatively; "she is making a fool of me."

"And what do you expect to come of it?"

"Nothing good!" And Roderick put his hands into his pockets, and looked as if he had announced the most colourless fact in the world.

"And in the light of your late interview, what do you make of your young lady?"

"If I could tell you that, it would be plain sailing. But she will not tell me again I am weak!"

"Are you very sure you are not weak?"

"I may be, but she shall never dare—she shall never care—to say it!"

Rowland said no more until they reached the Corso, when he asked his companion whether he were going to his studio.

Roderick started out of a reverie, and passed his hands over his eyes. "Oh no, I can't settle down to work after such a scene as that. I was not afraid of breaking my neck then, but I feel in a devil of a tremor now. I will go—I will go and sit in the sun on the Pincio!"

"Promise me this first," said Rowland, very solemnly—"that the next time you meet Miss Light it shall be on the earth and not in the air!"

Since his return from Frascati Roderick had been working doggedly at the statue ordered by Mr. Leavenworth. To Rowland's eye he had made a very fair beginning, but he had himself insisted from the first that he liked neither his subject nor his patron, and that it was impossible to feel any warmth of interest in a work which was to be incorporated into the ponderous personality of Mr. Leavenworth. It was all against the grain; he wrought without love. Nevertheless after a fashion he wrought, and the figure grew beneath his hands. Miss Blanchard's friend was ordering works of art on every side, and his purveyors were in many cases persons whom Roderick declared it was an infamy to be associated with. "There had been famous tailors," he said, "who declined to make you a coat unless you should get the hat you were to wear with it from an artist of their own choosing." It seemed to him that he had an equal right to exact that his statue should not form part of the same system of ornament as the "Pearl of Perugia," a picture by an American *confrère* who had, in Mr. Leavenworth's opinion, a prodigious eye for colour. As a liberal customer, Mr. Leavenworth used to drop into Roderick's studio to see

how things were getting on, and give a friendly hint, or exert an enlightened control. He would seat himself squarely, plant his gold-topped cane between his legs, which he held very much apart, rest his large white hands on the head, and enunciate the principles of spiritual art—a species of fluid wisdom which appeared to rise in bucketfuls, as he turned the crank, from the well-like depths of his moral consciousness. His benignant and imperturbable pomposity gave Roderick the sense of suffocating beneath an immense feather-bed, and the worst of the matter was that the good gentleman's placid vanity had an integument impenetrable to sarcastic shafts. Roderick admitted that in thinking over the tribulations of struggling genius the danger of dying of too much attention had never occurred to him.

The deterring effect of the episode of the Coliseum was apparently of long continuance; if Roderick's nerves had been shaken his hand needed time to recover its steadiness. He cultivated composure upon principles of his own; by frequenting entertainments from which he returned at four o'clock in the morning, and lapsing into habits which might fairly be called irregular. He had hitherto made few friends among the artistic fraternity; chiefly because he had taken no trouble about it, and there was in his demeanour an elastic independence of the favour of his fellow-mortals which made social advances on his own part peculiarly necessary. Rowland had told him more than once that he ought to fraternise a trifle more with the other artists, and he had always answered that he had not the smallest objection to fraternising; let them come! But they came on rare occasions, and Roderick was not punctilious about returning their visits. He declared there was not one of them the fruits of whose genius gave him the least desire to delve in the parent soil. For Gloriani he professed an ineffable contempt, and having been once to look at his wares never crossed his threshold again. The only one of the

fraternity for whom by his own admission he cared a straw was little Singleton; but he took an exclusively facetious view of this humble genius whenever he encountered him, and quite forgot his existence in the intervals. He had never been to see him, but Singleton edged his way from time to time timidly into Roderick's studio, and agreed with characteristic modesty that brilliant fellows like Hudson might consent to receive homage but could hardly be expected to render it. Roderick never acknowledged applause, and apparently failed to observe whether poor Singleton spoke in admiration or in blame. Roderick's taste as to companions was singularly capricious. There were very good fellows that were disposed to cultivate him who bored him to death; and there were others in whom even Rowland's good-nature was unable to discover a pretext for tolerance in whom he appeared to find the highest social qualities. He gave the most fantastic reasons for his likes and dislikes. He would declare he could not speak a civil word to a man who brushed his hair in a certain fashion, and he would explain his unaccountable fancy for an individual of imperceptible merit by telling you that he had an ancestor who in the thirteenth century had walled up his wife alive. "I like to talk to a man whose ancestor has walled up his wife alive," he would say. "You may not see the fun of it, and think poor P—— is a very dull fellow. It's very possible; I don't ask you to admire him. But for reasons of my own I like to see him about. The old fellow left her for three days with her face uncovered, and placed a looking-glass opposite to her, so that she could see, as he said, if her gown was a fit!"

His relish for an odd flavour in his friends had led him to make the acquaintance of a number of people outside of Rowland's well-ordered circle, and he made no secret of their being very queer fish. He formed an intimacy, among others, with a crazy fellow who had come to Rome

as an emissary of one of the Central American republics, to drive some ecclesiastical bargain with the papal government. The Pope had given him the cold shoulder, but since he had not prospered as a diplomatist he had sought compensation as a man of the world, and his great flamboyant curricle and negro lackeys were for several weeks one of the striking ornaments of the Pincian. He spoke a queer jargon of Italian, Spanish, French, and English, humorously relieved with scraps of ecclesiastical Latin, and to those who inquired of Roderick what he found to interest him in this pretentious jackanapes, the latter would reply, looking at his interlocutor with his lucid blue eyes, that it was worth any sacrifice to hear him talk nonsense! The two had gone together one night to a ball given by a lady of some renown in the Spanish colony, and very late, on his way home, Roderick came up to Rowland's rooms, in the windows of which he had seen a light. Rowland was going to bed, but Roderick flung himself into an arm-chair and chattered for an hour. The friends of the Costa Rican envoy were as amusing as himself, and in very much the same line. The mistress of the house had worn a yellow satin dress and gold heels on her slippers, and at the close of the entertainment had sent for a pair of castanets, tucked up her petticoats, and danced a fandango, while the gentlemen sat cross-legged on the floor. "It was awfully low," Roderick said; "all of a sudden I perceived it and bolted. Nothing of that kind ever amuses me to the end; before it's half over it bores me to death; it makes me sick. Hang it, why can't a poor fellow enjoy things in peace? My illusions are all broken-winded; they won't carry me twenty paces! I can't laugh and forget; my laugh dies away before it begins. Your friend Stendhal writes on his book-covers (I never got further) that he has seen too early in life *la beauté parfaite*. I don't know how early he saw it; I saw it before I was born—in another state of being! I can't describe it positively; I can only say

I don't find it anywhere now. Not at the bottom of champagne glasses; not, strange as it may seem, in that extra half-yard or so of shoulder that some women have their ball-dresses cut to expose. I don't find it at noisy supper-tables where half a dozen ugly men with pomatumed heads are rapidly growing uglier still with heat and wine; nor when I come away and walk through these squalid black streets and go out into the Forum and see a few old battered stone posts standing there like gnawed bones stuck into the earth. Everything is mean and dusky and shabby, and the men and women who make up this so-called brilliant society are the meanest and shabbiest of all. They have no real spontaneity; they are nothing but parrots and popinjays. They have no more dignity than so many grasshoppers. Nothing is good but one!" And he jumped up and stood looking at one of his statues, which shone vaguely across the room in the dim lamplight.

"Yes, do tell us," said Rowland, "what to hold on by!"

"Those things of mine were tolerably good," he answered. "But my idea was better—and that's what I mean!"

Rowland said nothing. He was willing to wait for Roderick to complete the circle of his metamorphoses, but he had no desire to officiate as chorus to the play.

"You think I have the 'cheek' of the devil himself," the latter said at last, "coming up to moralise at this hour of the night! You think I want to throw dust into your eyes, to put you off the scent. That's your eminently rational view of the case."

"Excuse me from taking any view at all," said Rowland.

"You have given me up, then?"

"No, I have merely suspended judgment. I am waiting."

Roderick looked at him a moment. "What are you waiting for?"

Rowland made an angry gesture. "Oh, miserable boy! When you have hit your mark and made people care for you, you shouldn't twist your weapon about at that rate in their vitals. Allow me to say I am sleepy. Good-night!"

END OF VOL. I.

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